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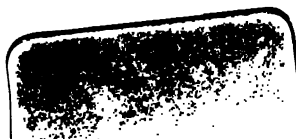


1840.

273.



BODLEIAN LIBRARY
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PRINTED BY O. ADLARD, BARTHOLOMEW CLOSE.

HAKON JARL,

A Tragedy,

IN FIVE ACTS.

TRANSLATED FROM

THE DANISH OF ÖHLENSCHLÄGER.

AND

POEMS

AFTER VARIOUS AUTHORS.



LONDON:

T. HOOKHAM, OLD BOND STREET.

1840.

273.

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HAKON JARL.

PERSONÆ.

OLAF TRYGVESON, *King in Dublin.*

HAKON KLADA-JARL, *named the Rich, Ruler of
Norway.*

ERLING, *his Son.*

THORER KLAKE, *a Merchant.*

CARLSHOVED, } *Olaf's Kinsmen.*
JOSTEIN, }

EINAR TAMBESKIALVER, *a young Bowman.*

BERGTHOR, *a Smith.*

GUDRUN, } *his Daughters.*
ASKRID, }

ORM, } *their Betrothed.*
THORVALD, }

THORA OF RIMOLD.

LANGBRAND, *Priest.*

ANDER, *an aged one-eyed man.*

GRIB, *Thorer Klake's Thrall.*

KARKER, }
STEIN, } *Hakon's Thralls.*
LEIF, }

INGER, *Thora's Maid.*

Priests, Warriors, Husbandmen, Thralls.

HAKON JARL.

ACT THE FIRST.

AN OPEN COURT, WITH TREES, IN FRONT OF
HAKON KLADA-JARL'S DWELLING.

*A wing of the building extends into the court—
the windows open. KARKER and GRIB sit
under a tree, with a flagon of ale and food by
them. Mirth and revelry heard within.*

KARKER.

HARK, what a noise they make ! What revelry !
I hear thy master Thorer Klake's voice :
He tells them of his tour to foreign lands.

GRIB.

So doth he well ! 'tis worthy of being heard
How finely he hath bartered his goods
Throughout the northern coast, in every place,
And thereby gained silver and red gold.
A shrewd and clever head my master hath :
He should have lived in Harald Graafeld's time.

KARKER.

And wherefore in his time ?

GRIB.

He was a king !
Aided the land's prosperity and trade ;
A king, who, labouring for his country's weal,
Threw off the purple mantle with its gold.
And reign'd, in humble sheep-skins simply clad.

KARKER.

And therefore Harald Graafeld was he named ?

GRIB.

To all intents, assuredly he was.

KARKER.

Yet, take thou heed, and laud him not too much !
The Jarl is near us, and it likes him not
To hear another one too highly praised.

GRIB.

Thanks for thy timely hint, good friend !

KARKER.

No thanks.

But, Grib, I prithee tell me something else :
Nothing amusing hear we, but must sit
Apart, and weary in our loneliness.

GRIB.

Ha, could I enter now, and seat myself
At yon high board—with unrestrained hand
Grasp the gold horn, amid the other guests !

KARKER.

Beware, beware ! What dangerous words are
these !

Take thou good heed ! content thee with thy lot !
Let it suffice, to thralldom were we born.

GRIB.

And with such words, canst lull thy soul to
sleep?

KARKER.

And wherefore not, I pray? What can't be
help'd
Must rest e'en as it is.

GRIB.

Assuredly!

KARKER.

What boots it us? Have we not borne it long?
Thee Thorer Klake liketh, Hakon me.
Now it is clear, I have the better lot:
Thy master but a simple merchant is;
Mine is a greater, for he is a Jarl,
And the most mighty Jarl in Norway's land;
Hath all the sixteen others under him;
So is he fit and proper to be king.
Now is not my lot fortunate? Before,
I was oblig'd to drive the plough, make hay,
And in the sheep-cot lay me many a night:
Now have I good soft clothes, the best of food,
Little to do, a winter's lodging warm,
Receive few blows——

GRIB.

To thy lot wast thou born.

KARKER.

So saith my master Hakon, many a time.
He searched long before he found a lad
Like me. He has his fancies, you must know.

He says with truth, a thrall should straight obey ;
Should trusty be ; but without any pride ;
Should vigorous be, and labour for his lord.

GRIB.

In short, be all that we doth wish a dog.

KARKER.

So soon as Hakon Jarl beheld me first,
He found me just what I behov'd to be.
He saw my broad, low forehead,—marked, too,
My short, thick fingers, and my horny hands,
My flat nose, dull eyes, and my heavy gait ?
And all was exactly what he wish'd.
Now am I daily with him. There are few
Who understand so thoroughly as I
All that he undertakes, 'twixt year and day.

GRIB.

Hush, hush ! Be silent ! Now they speak again
Therein of Olaf, son of Trygyve.

KARKER.

Who

Is this Olaf ?

GRIB.

Oh, a warrior brave !
Once thrall, as I ; but now is married to
The king of Dublin's sister—nay, is king.

KARKER.

And yet was born a thrall ?

GRIB [*sighing*].

He was not born
To thralldom ; for his father was a king !

KARKER.

Ah ! then 'twere easy to become a king.

GRIB.

As Olaf became one, 'twere no light task ;
For while he yet was in his mother's womb,
Misfortune and adversity were his.

KARKER.

They go. Stand up ! for yonder comes the Jarl
From the carousal board, with all his guests.

[HAKON JARL and his warriors pass across
the open court.]

GRIB.

A noble warrior is old Hakon Jarl :
He towers above them like a gnarled oak,
High o'er the lowly saplings.

KARKER.

He now goes,
As is his wont, to take his evening walk.
Now must I hasten in to clear the board,
And overlook the other thralls. Wilt thou
Go in with me ?

GRIB.

No ! I will here remain :
Here in this spacious high hall, which is made
As well for me as for the mightiest.
[Goes among the trees.]

KARKER.

Good lack, how proud it is ! How proud it is !
[Exit.]

AN OFFERING GROVE.

The twelve high gods' statues of hewn granite are seen ; that of Odin in the centre. The setting sun illumines them with ruddy beams.

GUÐRUN and ASKRID enter, the former with a garland of flowers.

ASKRID.

Ah, sister ! whither dost thou lead me now ?
What have we dared ? The grove of the high gods ;
Where no unconsecrated foot may tread !

GUÐRUN.

Oh, they who faithfully and truly love
Are hallowed ; and thou lovest even as I.

ASKRID.

How my heart throbbeth ! Sister ! dost thou see,
How still and awfully the great gods stand,
And sternly gaze on us with threatening looks ?
Do not provoke the gods, my sister ! Come !

GUÐRUN.

All do not look so sternly upon us :
Blest Frigga smileth a kind mother's smile.
And seest thou not the graceful, lovely Freia ?
Benignly on her daughters doth she gaze.

ASKRID.

Her loveliness doth fill the heart with joy :
As every youth in Norway, doth she know,
Guðrun is Lunda's sun.

GUDRUN.

My Askrid, go !
Hasten thou home, and I will follow thee,
As soon as I have finished this wreath.

ASKRID.

Ah, vain employ ? wherefore such finery ?
My Orm will not come home, I ween, to-night,
To-morrow, 'twill be seen.

GUDRUN.

Ah ! do go first,
And leave me here alone.

ASKRID.

Now, thou 'rt in love ;
And then the heart doth pant for solitude.
Ah ! see how gloriously yon setting sun
Poureth his golden streams of ruddy light,
Piercing the darkness of the embowering trees !
Thus Lunda's sun doth on the other beam.

[*Erit* ASKRID.]

GUDRUN.

At length, am I alone. My father's gods !
Oh ! be not angry with a guileless maid,
Who doth presume, with timorous, fearful foot,
To tread within your hallowed, shadowy grove !
O, lovely Freia ! O my goddess ! mine !
Oh ! dare I so presume ? Here have I wreathed
A garland of thy fresh and tender flowers :
As fairies light, they sweetly did disport
In the glad beam of summer-evening's sun.

Freia ! forgive thy maid, whose trembling step,
Dareth thy sacred statue to draw near !
Forgive her, that with light and timid hand,
On thy rich locks this garland she doth place !

*[She mounts the pedestal of the statue and placeth
the garland on Freia's head.]*

HAKON JARL and THORER KLAKE enter the
grove. GUDRUN remains frightened and silent,
standing on the pedestal.

HAKON.

We are alone here. This deep shadowy grove
No mortal entereth, save Odin's priests
And Hakon.

THORER.

Noble Jarl ! thy confidence
Makes Thorer proud.

HAKON.

Thorer ! didst thou believe
What was related at the board was new
Unto mine ear ?

THORER.

From thy astonishment
And wrapt attention, if I were to judge,
Or if, in short, I readily look'd aright,
It was new.

HAKON.

Thorer ! trust not to my looks !
My countenance is mine, and must obey
Its master ;—therefore, whatsoe'er I seem

Is merely semblance ;—I must needs dissemble
Amid the throng :—But here we are alone :
Know then, I knew the son of Trygve well,
Ere thou, this day, didst my attention raise.

THORER.

Then it is probable that hero's fame
Hath also reach'd thine ear, most noble Jarl ;
But still it seemeth that thou dost take up
This matter with unwonted seriousness.

HAKON.

Give me thy hand that thou art true to me.

THORER.

Thou knowest that I am. To thee alone
All I enjoy I owe. Thou gav'st me ships :
Thou art my fortune's author, and its lord.

HAKON.

Thorer ! Thou art one after mine own heart :
Thee have I longed for. Thou hast the skill
To accomplish whatsoe'er thou dost resolve :
And should there come a hostile hindering,
Valiant art thou, and usest sword and axe,
As well as thou before didst use thy thought.—
So should it be.

THORER.

Great Odin gave us powers
For widest differing ends ; each to be used,
While no one power another doth impair.

HAKON.

Whate'er a man is destin'd for, he feels ;

And innate inclination doth unfold,
And bring to light and action, innate power.
Our purpose we accomplish as we can ;
No other motive do men's deeds behoove.

THORER.

Thy words are true, my good lord !

HAKON.

I have ever

Felt strong within me a desire to reign :
To govern Norway's ancient kingdom was
My first, my highest, my unfading thought.

THORER.

My lord, 'twas worthy of thee : thy desire
Thou hast attain'd.

HAKON.

No : my good friend, not quite.

E'en now they call me simply, Hakon Jarl.
To a Jarl's power and station was I born ;
They, therefore, needed not be striven for.

THORER.

It resteth in thy power, whene'er thou wilt,
To be by one and all saluted king.

HAKON.

In truth, I hope that my high-minded Norskmenn
Will feel 'tis more becoming that our land
Be govern'd by a king than by a Jarl.
As soon as I have summon'd the next Thing
I will propose this to the assembled bondas.
The artificer, the brave old hero, Bergthor,

Is diligent upon the royal crown ;
When it is finish'd, shall the council sit.

THORER.

Let it go as it may, still art thou king.

HAKON.

Profit alone doth move thee, being a merchant :
Yet outward glory must not be despised.
A maid's embrace were not to me more dear
Than were the crown's around my kingly brow ;
For it with subtlety and might I 've striven.
Soon, soon, do I obtain my heart's desire ;
But now, the day fast draweth to a close,
And night doth bend beneath the evening dew,
As the Strald Eivin singeth in his lay.
My raven locks are interspers'd with white.—
Give me thy hand !

[THORER gives his hand : HAKON graspeth it
then relinquishing it, says dejectedly,]

There was a time my grasp
Had made the red blood spout from 'neath thy
nails,
As juice from fruit—and now, thou feel'st it not !

THORER.

A man should ne'er be mov'd by a hand's grasp,
Let it be e'er so hard !

HAKON.

Mine was not hard :
Twere flattery to say so.—Mark my brow,

How it is plough'd and furrow'd by the share
Of ruthless time !

THORER.

Wrinkles become a man.

HAKON.

But Norway's lovely daughters like them not.
In short my friend, I wither, I decay :
This I perceive, and therefore would enjoy
The evening of my life. My sun must set ;
But it shall set in glory, as in peace !
Woe to the cloud that would o'ershadow it !

THORER.

But where, my lord, is that audacious cloud ?

HAKON.

'Tis in the west !—just where it should not be.

THORER.

Olaf in Dublin ?

HAKON.

Olaf doth descend

In line direct from Harald, the fair-haired.
Thou knowest well, my friend, our Norsk bondas :
Warriors are they of valour ; but too given
To superstition and vain prejudice.
I do believe, the fame of all my deeds
Would be obscured by the royal birth
Of Olaf, if 'twere known he yet doth live.

THORER.

Thou but imagin'st this, my noble lord !

HAKON.

Imagine ! But imagine !—Thorer Klake,
I know my people.—Should this fanatic,
This traitor to his country, should he sit
On Norway's royal throne ?

THORER.

A traitor, sir ?

HAKON.

At Dannevirke stood I with my troops,
And my men were Norwegians. We advanc'd
To succour Harald, son of Gorm : there stood
Young Olaf 'midst the hostile ranks, and help'd
The Christian Otto, Norden's fort to burn.
A traitor to his country !—Doth the term
Offend thine ear ? What then shall he be call'd
Who to his gods is false ?

THORER.

Nay ! never false !

The son of Trygyve never did believe
In Odin.

HAKON.

A blasphemer of our gods——
Should such ascend the throne of Norway's
kings ?

THORER.

Who harboureth such a thought ?

HAKON.

I do, my friend !

And, perchance, Olaf also ! All the race

Of Harald, save this one, are rooted out :

Mine is as pure, as noble blood as his.

From oldest time, the Jarl of Klada was

Next to the king, and nearest to the crown.—

None interveneth, but a fanatic,

One who rejecteth his own country's faith,—

A thrall, bought out of bondage,—who was born

Amid the trackless woods, the wilderness ;

His mother wandering when his sire was
dead ;—

'Tis a light matter a king's son to be,

In such a wise. Ah—but by all the gods

He shall not let me, nor, ye sacred powers !

Shall impiously oppose Valhalla's might !—

O, Odin, god of hosts ! Great Thor and Freia !—

*[He turns and approaches the statues ; when
perceiving GUDRUN,]*

What do I see ? What would this maiden here ?

GUDRUN.

Oh ! noble, gracious Jarl ! Forgive ! Forgive !

Oh, I shall die of terror ! Oh, forgive !

I know it is forbidden to approach

The great god's sanctuary :—I know it—yet

Forgive me ! Oh, forgive me, noble lord !

HAKON *[astonished]*.

Fair maid, why art thou in the grove ? Art
come

To listen to my words ? It cannot be !

A spy ?

GUÐRUN.

By Freia ! by mine innocence !
I have not heard a word. I had sprang down,
When first thou enter'dst ; but the fear to fall,
And be perceived——

HAKON.

What wouldst thou, then, here ?

GUÐRUN.

Alas ! that I am forc'd to make it known ?
I am the daughter of thy aged Bergthor,
Orm Lyrgia's betroth'd : and so—and so,
I wreath'd a garland of sweet flowers for Freia,
And ventur'd in the grove—But, oh ! forgive !
I but desir'd to deck my goddess's brow.

HAKON.

Ha ! happy, welcome meeting ! Thou art then
The loveliest of all Lunda's lovely maids,
Whom thy adoring wooers therefore call
The Sun of Lunda ?

GUÐRUN.

Ah, my noble lord !
Let me descend. I promise faithfully,
I never, never more will enter here.

HAKON.

By Freia in Folkvanger, she is fair !
Allow me, lovely one, to aid thee down.
[*He lifts her on his arm and so bears her to the front.*]
Light as a fairy, yet a vigorous flower !

Tell me, sweet one, how dost thou like to sit
On the Jarl Hakon's powerful warrior arm !

GUÐRUN.

My lord, I do beseech thee, let me down :
Dishonour not the high god's sanctuary.

HAKON

[*Lets her down, with a glance of alarm towards
the statues of the gods*].

Dishonour ! Ah, how can so sweet a mouth
Give utterance to a word so bitter ?—Ah !
What beauteous fingers, what white, graceful
hands !

[*Kisses them.*

GUÐRUN.

By all thou holdest sacred, let me go !

HAKON

[*Throwing his arm round her waist*].

And hath old wily Bergthor kept thee hid ?
And when I ask'd to see thee, thou wast gone,
Wast on a visit, Thor knows, to thy aunt
In Guldbrands-dale !

GUÐRUN.

Ah, what was there to see
In one betrothed to a bonda poor ?
But he is jealous, Jarl. If he should come !——
Oh, let me go !

HAKON.

If he should come ! What fear ?

I straightway would invite myself as guest,
Unto your nuptials : ay ! and, by my troth !
Would not forget bridegifts.

GUDRUN.

Oh, let me go !

HAKON.

From Freia's pine-grove dost thou not escape
Till thou hast granted me a kiss.

GUDRUN.

Ah, Heaven !

HAKON.

Ah, Heaven ! How ? Is the great Hakon Jarl,
Soon Norway's king, denied by thee one kiss ?
And must he sue in vain ?

GUDRUN.

Oh ! I shall die !

[He snatches a kiss, and she escapes.]

HAKON.

Thou fleest, timid fawn ; and the old bear
Is swift no more to seize thee in thy flight.
Yet, stay !

THORER.

Jarl Hakon !

HAKON.

What true loveliness !

Didst see her long and glossy golden hair,
Wreath'd in rich tresses with a scarlet band ?
Didst see her round, luxuriant arms ? Her eyes—

Those deep-blue, love-redolent, heavenly eyes?
Her full, white, panting bosom menacing
To burst the silver chain?

THORER.

My worthy lord!

HAKON.

Oh, what was Berglioth's beauty,—what, indeed,
Thora of Rimold's, when compared to hers?

THORER.

By Odin! she is fair. But, noble sir,
Forget not wherefore we are here: but now—
Thou to thy servant wast about to intrust
A matter of the greatest moment.

HAKON.

Moment!

Hard, frozen icicle! Is there no spark
Of love's fire smouldering still within thy heart?
Ha! feel then mine! It beats with youthful
throb.—

And wherefore think'st thou I desire to be
Lord of a mighty, wide-extending land,
If 'tis not my desire, as 'tis my right,
To cull a flower wherever it may grow?

THORER.

But Olaf—my dear lord!

HAKON.

Ha! It is true!

'Twas well that I discover'd her so soon.

She vow'd she had heard nothing. I believe it.—
Guileless she is—vow'd by her innocence.—
But there approach Jostein and Carlshoved.
I did, indeed, attend them.

JOSTEIN and CARLSHOVED *enter*.

HAKON [*advancing to meet them*].

Welcome hither !

Here have I three of my most valued friends.
Why can I not to each, at once, extend
A hand ?

CARLSHOVED.

Most noble Jarl, our highest pride
Is that thou hold'st us dear.

HAKON.

Ye are aware

What hath so long lain nearest to my heart,
And wherefore privately I've call'd ye here.
The worthy Thorer whom I did attend,
In order to accomplish my design,
Hath but an inkling of it. Hear me, then :
My days have pass'd in turmoil, care, and war ;
And many weeds, wild shrubs, opposing briars,
Had to be burst through, torn up, clear'd away,
Or ere the pine could shoot forth and attain
The strength and height that heaven had des-
tin'd it.

Ye are my friends, and unto ye I can
Disclose, unveiled, my deep heart's designs.

My name is known and revered through the
north :

I've fought my way to Norway's highest seat,
And my foes only can my deeds misjudge.
The foolish Harald Graafeld and his kin
Despoil'd the land, without or sense or power
To strengthen and maintain the rights to which
They were by birth entitled. As a dance
Of wanton elves, mingling in confus'd maze,
They thwarted, cross'd, and strove amongst
themselves,

And fell by one another's murderous hands.
The only hinderance Harald Graafeld—
I do confess, let subtlety outpoise
All the good fortune granted him by fate.
The brother of the Danish king, men say,
I foully dealt by.—'Tis a foolish lie !
The coward merchant, tired of gold, desir'd
His brother's kingdom to obtain in part,
And plac'd his trust and confidence in me.
I did delude the base, low-minded wretch,
Allured Harald Graafeld there, and all
In the sheer hope of winning. He, in truth,
As little merited to wear the crown
As this Gold-Harald. By Lümfiord they fought,
And both were slain ; Halsä was to them
The common grave of blind desire of gain ;
And Harald Blaätand hath his kingdom now,

Entire, unmain'd,—and this he oweth me.
 That I have menac'd him, when, since, he hath
 Demanded tribute, fealty, and homage,
 No man in Norway will upbraid me for.
 Each action of my life, and, above all,
 The last at Hirmigsvaag,—when Jomsborg's power
 Was overthrown; when, desperate, overboard
 Sprang Bua, with the stumps of both his arms
 Thrust in the handles of the treasure chest,—
 Have prov'd my prudence, as my subtlety.—
 Now sinks my sun to rest. A transient hour
 Of evening red is all that now remains:
 But that shall not be clouded!—Trygyve's son
 Is the sole remnant of the ancient race.
 Ye think, he sits now quietly in Britain?
 What wilt thou say, most sage and prudent
 Thorer,
 When I inform your wisdom, he is *here*?

THORER.

Here?

CARLSHOVED.

In Norway?

JOSTEIN.

Olaf?—Impossible!—

HAKON.

I laughed within myself, when at the board,
 Thou didst inform us—thy important mien
 Betokening news of greatest weight and moment—
 Of this thy royal friend in Dublin still,

The gentle Olaf: e'en as if long time
I had not kept on him a watchful eye.
Then was I silent: now 'tis time to speak.
Know, then, this morning was a message brought
From one of the light vessels that keep watch
Off the coast, night and day, Olaf doth sail
To Valdemar of Russia with a fleet,
But hath put in at Moster—on his way,
To *visit*, as it pleaseth him to say,
His fatherland.

THORER.

King Olaf!—Can this be?

HAKON.

Now if he, in enthusiastic wise,
Hath really stopp'd here, on his way, to fill
His lungs with a few draughts of mountain air,
I know not, and it boots me not to know:
But this I will know, understand me well,
If something else doth not lie mask'd, conceal'd
Behind this simple visit. Thou hast been
His guest, my friend! Now natural it is
In thee to visit him, when thou dost hear
Of his arrival. The wind favours thee,—
To-morrow art thou there at dawn of day.
Say, wilt thou, as a friendship done to me,
Straightway take ship and seek him? And the
while
Thou tell'st him, as his friend, what thou seest fit,
Other reports withhold with due reserve.

THORER.

What is thy purpose, sir?

HAKON.

E'en, as I say,
Olaf's design to know: but, above all,
To encounter him in arms. Thorer, thou'rt
shrewd,
Experienc'd, wary, wont to deal with men;
How easy 'twere for thee to make him stay
Until I could arrive there with my ships!
Hath he not brought a fleet? Might against
might——

It is in old Norwegian wise; of this
Can no man disapprove, I ween.

CARLSHOVED.

None, none.

THORER.

And by what means can I detain him, Jarl?

HAKON.

Touch, touch the chord to which his heart
responds,—
Sing him the lay which he so fain would hear.
Tell—(in what manner thou know'st best, my
friend,)—

How everywhere they murmur, and await
In many places, but a word, a sign
From a bold leader.—Tempt him, thus, inland!
There would I rather meet him,—I am old,
And ill can bear the sea. Will he not stay,

But doth proceed as he at first design'd,
Though the whole land invite him to the throne,
Then is he truly honorable,—I,
E'en by suspecting him, have done him wrong ;—
So saileth he his way, and I 'm at peace.

THORER.

My lord, thou speakest wisely. I will do
Thy bidding with what diligence I can.

HAKON.

It is not for vain thanks thou servest me,
My worthy friend.

THORER.

That know I well, my lord.

Jarl Hakon aye rewardeth like a king :
Yet well thou knowest my faithfulness—

HAKON [*presses his hand*].

Good Thorer !

CARLSHOVED.

Comes Olaf, as is possible, to rob
And plunder on the coast, he thus shall find
Force to oppose and overcome his own ;
And comes he with intent to spy and plot,
He falleth in the snare that he hath laid.

HAKON.

Will ye, as Olaf's kinsmen, also go,
In order to aver what Thorer says ?

JUSTEIN.

He is our kinsman, but thou art our lord,

Our friend : and the deceit is but to prove
The innocence of Olaf.

THORER.

"Tis most true !

HAKON [*unsheaths his sword*].

Then swear upon this bare, unsullied glave,
In Odin's, in the high god's sacred grove,
Swear, ye will stand by me in life, in death !

ALL THREE.

We swear, we swear by Odin, Thor, and Freia !

[*Odin's statue falls to the ground.*]

JOSTEIN.

Ha ! what was that ?

CARLSHOVED.

Great Odin's statue fell !

THORER.

Low fallen in the dust !

HAKON

[*recovering himself, goes to the spot*].

The crumbling stone
Hath by time, had a fissure wide and deep.
Come, see ye : it is dark, but ye can see,
The break is old ; but a small piece held fast,
Which could be broken by the slightest wind.—
No more at present ! At the evening board,
Will we converse upon the subject more.
Go now, my friends. I would be here alone.

[*Exeunt THORER, CARLSHOVED, and JOSTEIN.*]

[HAKON stands long examining in silence the fracture of the stone.]

It is not old.—Ha ! Odin, sacred god !

Why fell thy statue ? Was it in thy wrath ?

Or was its fall a warning unto me ?

Thou liest in the dust, while with fresh flowers

Freia doth smiling stand.—Betokeneth this,

That southern love shall o'ercome northern might ?

Odin forsake me not ! Destroy a foe,

Who hateth thee, who scoffeth at thy power !

[*He kneels.*]

I vow to thee a mighty sacrifice !

Ninety and nine black oxen and my foes

In Medelhuus I'll immolate to thee,

If thou but grantest me the dear-bought crown.

The offering bowls shall reek unto thy praise ;

Thy temple shall be sprinkled o'er with blood,

Its pillars shall be painted with warm gore ;

In Olaf's heart this hand shall plunge a sword.—

Of Dovre-field's hard marble, unto thee

Another statue, Odin, will I raise,

That shall defy eternity. [*He rises.*]

Dark night

Envelopes all things in her sombre veil.

[*He remains a few moments in silent thought.*]

I will go visit Bergthor and my crown.

[*Exit.*]

BERGTHOR'S FORGE.

BERGTHOR *enters with a crown in one hand, in the other a hammer: GRIB follows with a light.*

BERGTHOR.

Set the light down and bring my anvil here.
The finest day must close at length. 'Tis dark,
And something yet remaineth to be done.

GRIB.

How well thou know'st how to use thy hands !

BERGTHOR.

If it so glads thee as thou sayst it doth,
What's to prevent thee coming here by day,
To blow the bellows and give me thy help,
So long thy master Thorer stays at Klade.

GRIB.

Indeed, good sir, I've nothing else to do,
And cruelly the time doth weigh on me.
For, sooth to say, to live with other thralls
Pleaseth me not ; and what companionship
Can I have else ? O Thora in Thrudvanger,
Do not, ah ! do not scorn an honest thrall !—
Shall I now work the bellows ?

BERGTHOR.

No, not now.

Leave off, I tell thee, lad ! Give me yon file.

GRIB.

How fine and quick thou work'st.

BERGTHOR.

How quick I work?

What know'st thou of it? Yet thou shouldst
have seen

The time when, in my younger days, I forg'd
Arms for the brave king Hakon Athelstein:
There was a sword so sharp that it could cut
Hard stones as though 'twere flesh. But for this
crown,

It goes on slowly.—But there's time enough!

GRIB.

In truth 'tis nearly finished, my good sir.

BERGTHOR.

How the goose cackles!—First these precious
stones

Must be set in it.

[*Enter GUDRUN.*]

What! my daughter Gudrun!

What brings thee here all fluttered and in haste?

GUDRUN.

Ah! my dear father, Hakon Jarl hath seen me.

BERGTHOR.

Where?

GUDRUN.

In the grove.

BERGTHOR.

Have I not often said,

I will not have this running to the grove

With weeds and flowers, and God knows what
more trash ?

The good Valhalla's gods be thank'd, that thou
Shalt soon be married, so shall I be freed
From all the care and toil of guarding thee.

[He works at the crown].

Hear me, my lad : I would far rather make
Ten crowns, than I would watch and guard two
girls.

The metal's dangerous to meddle with !

GUÐRUN.

Ah ! father, I am fearful that the Jarl
Will come to seek me here ; and what will Orm
Say then ?

BERGTHOR.

Follow thee here !—Ah, Jarl !
That ne'er will do : I know thee far too well.—
Come daughter ! to the cellar must thou go.

GUÐRUN.

Ah ! must I then indeed be locked up there ?

BERGTHOR.

Perhaps thou'd rather choose being locked in
Jarl Hakon's arms.

GUÐRUN.

Ah ! he comes ! my dearest father !

BERGTHOR.

I know him well ; in sooth, there is no man
Can keep his wife in peace and quietness :

One's daughter, sister, mother, grandmother,
Are all alike in danger of this Jarl.
So to the cellar, daughter, shalt thou go:
I'm not at peace until I have thee there
Safe under lock and key, so come, away!
But where's thy sister?

GUDRUN.

Askrid decks the board.

BERGTHOR.

What can I do? but nought save bolt and bar
Can guard your honour from this Klade Jarl.
Away with thee! away! To-morrow morn
I'll send both of ye hence; thee to thy Orm,
And her to Thorvald. Then must they take care
Of their own goods, and keep ye if they can.

[*Exeunt BERGTHOR and GUDRUN.*]

GRIB

[*regards admiringly the crown on the anvil.*]

And so this is the crown! And it is thus
That crowns are made! When this is finished,
Jarl Hakon sets it on his head; and then,
Then swear allegiance—and so—he is king!
It is, in truth, most strange.

[*Takes up the crown.*]

How bright it is.

'Tis of the purest gold, how heavy too!
It weighs, it weighs—in troth, I'll try it on.
[*Sets the crown on his head.*]

It is too large, it does not fit me well ;
 I scarce can bear it. Lo ! it sits well now.
 A crown is not so light a thing to wear,
 As I did deem. Its weight does bend my neck.

[*Walks to and fro.*]

Now am I king. [*Takes the file.*]

Let this my sceptre be !

And thus I seat me on my kingly throne.

[*Seats himself on the anvil.*]

Now 'midst my subjects sit I at the Thing.

[*HAKON JARL enters unperceived by GRIB,
 and remains in the back-ground, observing
 GRIB's movements with curiosity.*]

I promise ye, my brave, high-minded Norksmen,
 That I will prove a gracious lord to ye,
 Provided ye elect me for your king :
 But if, audacious and self-will'd, ye dare
 Oppose what I with justice now desire,
 Trouble and shame await ye. —

[*Perceiving HAKON, is struck mute.*]

HAKON [*calmly*].

It goes well !

GRIB.

O, harm me not ! O, pardon me, great lord !

HAKON.

Dost tremble on thy throne ? A king ne'er should ;
 Although the storm may rage, above, around,
 And threaten him with downfall and with death,

He still should sit calm, dauntless, and unmov'd.
One glance of noble valour and of scorn—
And the awed storm is hush'd—the heavens are
clear,
And the sun beameth glorious on the crown.

GRIK.

Ah! thou art right, my lord! I feel too well
That I was never made to be a king.

[BERGTHOR enters with a large key which he
thrusts in his pocket on seeing the Jarl.]

HAKON.

Good eve, old man!

BERGTHOR.

Thou'rt welcome here, my lord!

[Perceives GRIK, who still remains in his per-
plexity sitting on the anvil.]

Help me, Vaulundur!—What does all this mean?

HAKON.

He plays the king.

BERGTHOR [*half aside*].

It seems the fashion now.—

[*Aloud.*]

Off with it! art thou mad?

HAKON.

I came too soon,

And heard but half the king's speech at the
Thing.

Is the youth thine?

BERGTHOR.

He is my working lad,
And Thorer Klake's thrall.

HAKON.

And to a thrall
Thou dost intrust the crown?

BERGTHOR.

I was oblig'd
To leave my work a moment, and to go
And in the cellar lock up both my girls:
And in the meantime has this foolish thrall
Presum'd with impudent——

HAKON.

Thou saidst thy daughters?

BERGTHOR.

Ay! one of them thou sawest, I believe.
Now is she fearful, as in truth am I,
Thou shouldst desire to see her oftener:
But now she's safe, lock'd up. To-morrow morn
I send a message unto her betroth'd,
And hold the bridal so soon as he comes:
And then must he take care of his own goods.

HAKON.

Ha, father Bergthor! What new whim is this?
Dost know, thou dost offend me?

BERGTHOR.

Be content!
It is my tender side, sir Jarl, I know:

Let us no longer touch upon the sore.—
Wilt thou not try the crown on? I have found
An ancient ring of iron: 'twas dug up
In Medelhuus's place of offering.
It went by heritage from son to son,
It was on it my grandsire form'd the crown
Of the dark Halfdan. Rusty though it be,
'Tis truly precious, as the measure old
Of Norway's royal crown.—Wilt try it on?
[HAKON sets the crown on, it falls over his eyes.]
It is too large! when thou dost set it on,
It blindeth thee, in truth.

HAKON [*enraged*].

Ha! vile bald-head
Gave I not thee my measure? Where is it?

BERGTHOR.

Thor only knoweth!—it is lost.—Methinks
Thou shouldst be able to wear Halfdan's crown.

HAKON.

Ha, Bergthor! Bergthor! true it is, thou'rt old,
Valiant, and honest, worthy of respect;
I pardon thee: but don't abuse my goodness.
I give thee yet two days; and woe to thee
If then the crown doth fit not Hakon's head!

[*Exit HAKON.*]

BERGTHOR

[*gazeth after him proudly and calmly*].
What wilt thou do to me? My hair is white—

A few short hours are all that now remain :
Wilt thou rob me of them ? And thinkest thou
That I will tremble, fearful at thy wrath ?
Bergthor will fall upon his sword and die,
Or ere he'll alter Norway's ancient crown.
Whom the crown fitteth, let him wear the crown !
[*Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT THE SECOND.

THE ISLAND OF MOSTER.

Mountains and forest. Sea in the distance.

OLAF, LANGBRAND, and warriors come from the strand, followed by THORER, JOSTEIN, and CARLSHOVED.

OLAF.

Thorer, this is indeed the generous act
Of a true friend and countryman, to sail
Hither by night to meet me. Thou wast right,
For I had been departed, hadst thou come
But one hour later; for the wind doth blow
Steady and fair from land; it veer'd about
At midnight. But how, Thorer, didst thou learn
That I was here?

THORER.

By merest chance, my lord.
A seaman did inform me yesterday,
At the Jarl's board. Thou winnest every heart,
King Olaf, by the kindness of thine own.
Could I forget thy hospitality,
When late my ship was damaged by a storm?

The night was mild and clear, the wind was fair,
And most unworthy had I proved myself
Of thy esteemed friendship, had I not
Hasten'd to welcome thee to Norway's shore.
When the wind chang'd, 'twas not the opposing
sea

That caused me annoy:—it was then thought
That the same wind which baffled us perchance
Might bear thee from the coast ere we arriv'd.

OLAF.

Hath the Jarl Hakon found it not amiss
That I have visited my fatherland?
My own ship only lies anchor'd in the Fiord,
The others lie without in the deep sea.
I did anticipate a groundless fear,
And would prevent the slightest cause of doubt
Of my intentions. But who are these men?

THORER.

They are thy kinsmen. This is Carlshoved,
And Jostein this: anxious were they to come,
To greet their unknown royal relative.
They are thy cousins on thy mother's side.

OLAF.

My kinsmen? Twofold welcome are ye here!

JOSTEIN.

Ola, I greet thee!

OLAF.

Ola! I can hear

Thou art a worthy one, and affable,
Thou art so plain of speech. Ah ! it is true :
I was a little child when with my mother
I was oblig'd to flee my fatherland.
So then ye are related unto Askrid ?

CARLSHOVED.

Thy mother Askrid was our aunt, my lord ;
Our father was her eldest brother Halfdan.

JOSTEIN.

It is thus, sir.

OLAF.

German, indeed, ye are !
Ah, I can see, Askrid ye do resemble ;
Although I lost my mother when so young.
Jostein, thou hast her dimple on thy cheek—
Carlshoved hath her golden gleaming hair.

CARLSHOVED.

My lord, it glads us thou dost find a likeness.

OLAF.

Now tell me, my good friends, how is't with
Norway ?

I sail'd from Ireland, as ye may have heard,
For Russia, where disturbances are rife.
My foster-father, Valdemar, being dead,
Ivan his son, my friend, is well dispos'd
To Christianity. With powerful aid
Of word and deed, with warriors and priests,
I hasten unto him. I sailed on,

Of Norway thinking not. But when afar
The dark, pine-clothed mountains did appear ;
My heart swell'd in my breast ; and I did feel
Joyful, I knew not why—but 'twas as if
My mind had suddenly recall'd some lov'd,
But long-forgotten ancient warrior-lay,
Heard in the happy hours of earliest youth.
The warm tears gush'd from my eyes.—The sails,
Which should have borne us on, flapp'd 'gainst
the mast ;
The pendant, as a bird, stretch'd its red wings,
As though it strove to tear itself away
And fly unto the land.—O ! then it was
Impossible for me to sail away.
Where is the son—could coldly turn his back
Upon his parent, when with tenderness
She stretched forth to him a mother's arms ?
To obviate suspicion and mistrust,
I've landed on this small isle's outward shore,
Where no one lives— where a few shepherd's huts
Peep sadly forth amidst the lifeless hills.
But something of old Norway would I know :
For I go far away, and who can tell
If ever more these eyes may gaze upon
My beloved fatherland. Then tell me, Thorer,
How stands it ? Good and well ?

THORER.

Ah, my lord, Norway

Doth still upon its hard rocks firmly stand,
It is a stalwart ground, which may not be
Shaken so easily.

OLAF.

That I believe !

If the white-bearded Odin, with his tricks,
And all his sorcery, cannot prevail,
And into pieces split these solid rocks,
Albeit he hath attempted many a year.

THORER.

'Tis true my lord, the land itself stands firm ;
And peacefully the birch blends with the pine ;
While the warm sunbeams from the barren rocks
Refracted, ripen the rich valley's corn ;
And still as fruitlessly as heretofore
The billows beat against the opposing cliffs.
But, noble sir, the while all nature blooms
In loveliness, tranquillity, and peace,
A venomous and deadly poison eats
Into the very entrails of the land.

OLAF.

What dost thou mean ? Doth not Jarl Hakon sit,
Peaceful and unoppos'd, in Trondelagen ?

THORER.

So hath he sat for a short space, my lord :
But the Norwegians, now, at length, have found
'Tis base to be subjected to a Jarl.

OLAF.

Why do they give him not the name of king?

THORER.

Doth one of the dark Halfdan's race ask this?

OLAF.

What influence can Halfdan or his race
Have o'er the minds of the Norwegian bondas?

THORER.

Far more than thou imaginest! Norskmenn
Have ever had an innate loyalty,
A love for their legitimate, true king.

OLAF.

And yet for fourteen years the Klada Jarl
Hath ruled the realm.

THORER.

How both by craft and might

He did obtain the station he now holds
Is known to thee as well as 'tis to us.
Who can deny Jarl Hakon's bravery?
Who can deny his subtlety and art?
Thou knowest well the sombre history,
How Gunhild's sons despoil'd and plundered,
And by their despicable folly lost
The last remains of honour and respect.
Jarl Hakon fairly vanquish'd them in fight:
Then came the friendship which he found the
means
To form with Harald Blaatand, Denmark's king.

He who would gain a point must fully know
 Its state and circumstance ; this Hakon knew.
 Little by little, as a merchant shrewd
 Who understandeth how to turn affairs
 To his advantage, did the Klada Jarl
 The land of Norway get within his hands.
 Wearied of war, the bondas long'd for peace,
 And therefore ruled he in tranquillity.
 What perfectly established his power
 Was Jomsborg's expedition, when he quell'd,
 For Norway's glory,—utterly destroy'd
 That dissolute, abandon'd power, which erst
 Fill'd all the north with terror and alarm.

OLAF.

And now, in the full glory of his fame,
 He hath grown wanton ?

THORER.

'Tis but natural !

Before was Hakon prudent, for he knew
 By prudence only was his power sustain'd;
 Now is his name the wonder of all men :—
 Jarl Hakon—O ! he is a conqueror !
 Who dare oppose him ? What can shake his
 power ?
 With such renown, with such exalted laud,
 Soon giddy, all his prudence he forgot :
 Ay, he remember'd not the people's love
 Is the sole stay and bulwark of the throne :

Confiding in his power and might, he deem'd
Caution and prudence were no more requir'd :
Each passion of his heart was then let loose,—
Each fancy of his brain allow'd full sway.
No longer courteous, condescensive, mild,
But haughty and imperious—he no more
The property of others did respect ;
But, still encroaching on the people's rights,
He seized their goods, their heritage, nay, worse,
Their wives and daughters did he make his prey,
And sacrifice them to his idol, lust.
What more can I relate ?—The smouldering fire
Spread unobserv'd and burst into a flame :
He feared not a foreign enemy,
But marked not the foe was in the land,
Until the canker gnaw'd the very heart.
And now he liveth in perpetual strife,
And hour by hour, do they forsake his cause :
While Norway anxiously awaits a chief,
A valiant warrior of true royal blood,
To throw the tyrant Hakon from his seat.

OLAF.

Ha, Thorer ! is it truth thou tellest me ?

THORER.

There stand thy kinsmen : all that I have said
Can they aver.

OLAF.

My handsome Jostein sad !—

Where is the smiling dimple on thy cheek ?
Why thou art sombre ? So it glads thee not
That Norway bursts the chains of slavery ?

JOSTEIN [*troubled*].

I am too young to understand aright
The interests of the country : but, my lord,
What Thorer doth relate is clear and plain.

THORER.

Need I assure thee, noble Olaf, now,
How joy'd I was to hear that thou wast come ?
At first, I did believe that thou hadst heard
Of the land's state, and straight had hastened
To profit by the opportunity :
But now that thou hast spoken, I perceive
It was the hand of heaven that led thee here.

OLAF.

Thorer, thou hast disquieted my soul.

THORER.

As seed when it fermenteth in the ground,
That it may shoot forth in life-giving spring.—
Thou hast not quite forgotten whence thou sprang ?

OLAF.

Say : is it not from Harald the fair hair'd ?

THORER.

In line direct, and that on male side.

OLAF.

Whose mother Ragnhild's dream was of a tree :
She dream'd that in a garden she reposed,

And from her bosom took a sprig with leaves,
 Which shot up straight into a mighty tree,
 Striking out, downwards, roots into the earth,
 And upwards, with exalted top to heaven ;
 Its trunk was round and of amazing size,
 And towards the ground its hue was that of
 blood,
 But all above green as fresh summer grass,
 With spreading, white boughs, stretching far and
 wide,
 The whole of Norway canopying o'er.—
 Was it not so ?

THORER.

So says the tale, my lord.

OLAF.

Was it not Harald of the flaxen hair,
 Who dream'd a wondrous dream of his fair locks ?
 How they in part, stream'd waving down to earth,
 In part unto his knees, some to his shoulders,
 The while some turn'd themselves in tender curls
 Around his temples ?

THORER.

My lord, 'tis most true.

Wise men in Norway did interpret it,
 As signifying of that great king race
 Which should succeed and govern in the north.

[*OLAF stands buried in deep thought.*]

What new thoughts now, in Olaf's soul awake ?

OLAF.

What new thoughts ? No new thoughts in truth,
my friend,
But old, long-cherish'd thoughts,—the dreams of
youth,
With manhood's firm resolve.

THORER.

Oh, my dear lord,
Thou 'rt worthy of thy birth ! But, pardon me,
Why hast thou never hitherto declared
Thy right and thy desire to wear the crown ?

OLAF.

'Twas far beyond my reach, and was possess'd
Already by another, while my heart
Was otherwise inclin'd. The tranquil peace
Of a contented spirit is more dear,
More precious far than all the thrones of earth.
Still to the south my inclination led,
To where the blessed Christian faith was taught,
And notwithstanding fortune favour'd me.
Already twice I've ruled o'er a land :
A sceptre love induced me to resign
In Venden, love in Ireland it restored.
Yet, Thorer, never in my life, with all
My wanderings, all my tossing to and fro,
My stay in foreign lands, my intercourse
With strangers, never did my heart forget
My fatherland, nor ever from my mind

Was the remembrance of my birth effaced :
The thought that mine was Norway's royal blood
Hath never slept, but still incited me
To seize the sword and make my birthright good.
But the Norsk bondas everywhere I heard
Were happy 'neath the sway of Hakon Jarl.
What power had I? In order to subdue
A country, powerful armies are requir'd :
If I of Norway cannot be the king,
In truth, my friends, I have no wish to be
The mere disturber of its state of peace.

THORER.

But now 'tis different, when the bondas hear
That the descendant of Haarfagre lives,
Nought can prevent them making thy cause
theirs,
Straightway thy vessels enter Trondhiem's fiord.
The friendship of thy cousins and myself,
I trust, I need not now assure thee of :
But I can solemnly aver, that men
Of greatest influence and power desire
To prove their love and loyalty to thee.
To bring these tidings have we hasten'd here.
If thou wilt hearken to a friend's advice,
No foreign expedition now attempt,
But follow where thy fate and fortune lead ;—
Be sure, they have not led thee here in vain.

OLAF [*after a few moments' silence*].

The tidings have indeed surprised me. Friends,

Excuse me for a while. Beneath yon tree
They pitch a tent—therein can ye repose
After last night's fatigues. I straight will come.
[CARLSHOVED, THORER, JOSTEIN, and OLAF's
warriors go. OLAF and LANGBRAND remain.

OLAF.

Langbrand, thou hast stood silent all the while.

LANGBRAND.

But felt great joy at thy good fortune, sire !
Thou shalt be king of a fair, noble land.

OLAF.

But over men who scorn and scoff at God.

LANGBRAND.

And so much greater shall thy glory be,
When thou hast brought them to the way of
truth.

OLAF.

Yes, Langbrand, yes : it was the hand of heaven
That led me here. I did, at first, resolve
To sail to Garderika.

LANGBRAND.

Thou hast not

Promised aught : It was thy will alone
That govern'd thee. To enterprises wont,
Tranquillity did weary thee ; thou sought'st
Achievements that a Christian might beseem ;
Thy heart with noble ardour did desire
Still further to confirm heaven's power on earth.

OLAF.

And, Langbrand, first in mine own fatherland.

LANGBRAND.

If Garderika Ivan needeth aid,
Thou canst assist him more as Norway's king.

OLAF.

We first must aid our country and our friends.—
To christen Norway—Oh! most glorious thought!

LANGBRAND.

For Norway, Garderika must give place.

OLAF.

But, Langbrand, — for I nought conceal from
thee—

'Tis not mere goodness glad'neth now my heart;
E'en at the prospect of my rights regain'd
It throbs with exultation. I am born
To Norway's royal crown: say, is it sin
In Olaf thus his birthright to desire?

LANGBRAND.

As truly as our heavenly Father loves
His children, and in them each guileless joy,
It is not, Olaf!—Thine's the blessed lot
To become shepherd to a Christian flock.

OLAF.

Good Langbrand, I desire to be alone.

LANGBRAND.

God strengthen thee, my young, heroic king!

[*Exit* LANGBRAND.]

OLAF [*kneeling*].

My heart is fill'd with rapture at the thought.
O, holy Jesus ! hast thou chosen me,
Me, powerless indeed without thine aid,
To combat for thy glory upon earth ?
Father ! behold ! my life is in thy hand :
Dispose of it as seemeth good to thee !

[*Rises exultingly.*]

Yes, yes ! I feel it ; O, I feel it now !
My arm is strong ; my breast with ardour glows.
Yes ! thine apostle will I be, O Lord !—
Redeemer ! with this sword whose hilt is form'd
In likeness of the cross on which thou diedst,
With this will I destroy each impious power
That dareth to oppose thy majesty ;
And as a faithful shepherd will I guard
The flock that thou committest to my care.
Where Odin's temple stern and sombre stood,
Where oft hath flow'd the innocent's heart's blood,
The fumes of frankincense and myrrh shall rise,
Instead of reeking gore, unto the skies.
No more his idol shall the priest blood streak ;
No more the victims agonized shriek,
Nor the wild cries of Odin's priests around
The pallid corse, the ear of nature wound :
The hymn of praise and the harp's gentle tone
Shall rise in peace to the Eternal's throne.
With pure devotion shall they bow the knee

In spirit and in truth to worship thee :
They shall forget things earthly, low, and vile :
With feasts no more thy house shall they defile.
Hate, murder, violence, and wrong shall flee,
And innocence and love shall gain the victory !
[Exit.]

KLADA. A WAY IN THE FOREST.

HAKON JARL *enters armed with sword, shield,
and bow, THORA meets him.*

HAKON [*stops confused*].

What do I see? My Thora ! Thou also
Hast been enticed by the balmy breath
Of this sweet day into the verdant wood.

THORA.

And what enticed thee here ? Not Thora ! No :
It was not her thou sought'st !—I see thou'rt arm'd.

HAKON.

Armed for battle, Thora : even now
I hastened to man my ships and sail.
We take the sea against a plunderer
Who layeth waste the coast.

THORA.

How thankful I
Should be to fortune for this interview !

HAKON.

By Karker I a message sent to thee.

THORA.

A message by thy slave!

HAKON.

I had no time ;

It was impossible for me to come.

THORA.

Ah, Hakon ! Hakon !

HAKON.

Vex me not with doubts !

THORA.

Too well I see thou lovest me no more.

HAKON.

And thinkest thou, reproaches would avail
Again to kindle the extinguish'd fire,
If it were so ?

THORA.

And am I thus rebuk'd ?

I, whom thou lovedst more than aught on earth ?
Perfidious ! What beguiling, honied words,
Deceitful, flow'd from thy deluding tongue.
Then it was I, and I alone, endear'd
Existence to the soul of Hakon Jarl :
'Twas I, and I alone, possess'd the power
To melt the iron of his warrior-heart,
And teach it to delight in constancy.
Alas ! I, innocent, believed thee :

My kindred and my home forsook, overlook'd
My reputation,—follow'd thee—and fell.—
And now—alas ! I merit this reproach !

HAKON.

What reproach, Thora ? Amid many a grace
And many a charm with which thou wast endow'd
Was that of high intelligence, all free
From vulgar prejudice. Thou dost complain
Of my inconstancy, and mak'st thyself
Of the same error guilty. Where is now
Thy view unprejudiced of human life ?
Thou sayest thou didst give thyself to me.
'Tis true ; and so thou mad'st me truly blest.
What wouldst thou more ? Was it a youthful
swain,

A tenderling whose heart the noon doth melt,
Who won thy love ? Didst thou not say thyself,
Thou lovedst me because I was a man,
And among men the noblest thou didst know ?
What should a man achieve ? Is it enough,
To sigh for ever in the arms of love ?
Thou wast a beauteous widow ; and thy days
At thine own home pass'd wearisome and void.
What hast thou sacrificed ? Well born and rich,
And independent, if thou wilt thou canst
Utter defiance all that men can say.
For two long months we've liv'd as lovingly
As any amorous pair in Freia's hall :

Now other aims attract the warrior-mind.
The audacious bondas, here and there, presume
To murmur, growling as a gathering storm ;
While pirate vessels prowl around the coast.
All this demandeth action. It behoves
The chief of Norway to direct his thoughts
To everything in season. For a while
There scarcely may be spared a single hour
For love's sweet converse. Come, my beauteous

Thora,

Be reasonable! For that little while
Beseech thy house, return to thine own home.
Believe me, absence strengthens languid love :
Soon shall we meet again; and thou shalt find
Thy Hakon more enamour'd than before.

THORA.

And thus 'tis ended ! thus my dream is broken !
And with this pitiable, cold stream of words
Is Thora's faithfulness, her love repaid !
I have deserved it. Ay ! by Asa Loka,
I have deserved thy base perfidiousness.
Thou say'st I am intelligent. Oh, yes !
Intelligent enough to know thee well.
'Twere vain, indeed, to attempt in thy cold heart
To reawaken love ; the tenderest flower
As well might live amid bleak winter's snow ;
But that thou, with such forward shamelessness
(Acquired by repeated perfidy),

Shouldst show thyself to be without remorse,
All heedless of the pain thou dost inflict,
That tortureth, that crusheth me to earth.

[*She weeps.*]

HAKON.

By Freia, Thora, thou art dear to me !
If 'twas, as thou imagin'st, my design
To abandon thee, it had not been reveal'd
With this tranquillity thou dost suspect.

THORA.

Thou liest, base one ! To thy face thou liest !
And thou mockest Freia. Ah ! beware
How thou dost swear by her ! She turns away
Her guileless eyes from thy perfidious smile.
Thou sensual wretch ! How could I e'er love thee ?
Yet I have loved thee.—Yes : the only one
Who ever lov'd thee with true heart-felt love
Was Thora ; for she loved thee for thyself.—
What was thy rank to me ? Am I not sprung
From race as noble and as famed as thine ?—
Imprudent as I was, I madly thought
To inspire thy heart with purity and truth.—
O, Odin ! When was Loka ever true ?—
But I will be reveng'd : brothers I have
And kindred, better warriors than thou :
By Asa Odin ! I will be reveng'd !

HAKON [*with cold contempt*].

Thou'rt out of breath, good Thora. Give thee time !

[*He calls, KARKER enters.*]

If thou hast more to say, here is my slave :
Tell him the rest. 'Tis not for Hakon Jarl
To listen to an angry woman's words.

[*Exit HAKON.*]

THORA.

What wilt thou, slave ?

KARKER.

An't please ye, rail away !
I'm here to listen—'tis my lord's desire.

THORA [*strikes him*].

Insolent thrall !

KARKER.

Bless ye, my lady fair !
There hurt ye your soft hand on my hard hide.

THORA.

Ah ! I debase myself. Where now is all
My pride and self-respect?—Thrall, leave my sight !

KARKER.

That was not what the Jarl commanded me.

THORA.

What then, did he command thee ?

KARKER.

That I should
Inform you, noble lady, that all waits
Prepar'd now, to carry you to Rimold.

THORA.

Was this the message thou shouldst bring to me,

For which thy lord himself could find no leisure ?
Well, Karker, well ; he is our lord, and I
Obey, and will depart immediately.

[*Exit THORA.*]

KARKER *calls the other Thralls, they enter.*

KARKER.

Now went the lady Thora home :—she parts
For Rimold presently. Behave yourselves
Well and discreetly. She's indeed, at times,
Hot headed ; and if anything goes wrong,
'Tis possible she strike ye o'er the face :
Such luck was mine—it joy'd me to the heart :
She has the sweetest, whitest, softest hand !
It seem'd to me, for all the world, as though
She pressed a silk cushion 'gainst my nose.
She fain would stay here longer, do ye see ?
That can I well believe ; but it wont do :
She must make room for others, in their turn.
To-morrow go a whole troop of our thralls
To Lunda, to bring Gudrun, Bergthor's daughter ;
And so she straight steps into Thora's place.

LEIF.

Already a new one ?

KARKER.

Already ! One can tell
You have not been any time at Klada yet,
Or else you would have said : What ! not before ?
'Tis full two months that Thora has been here.

It will not do, as you may well suppose,
If it did not go regularly in turn.

LEIF.

Go regularly in turn?

KARKER [*sagaciously*].

Ay, so it must.

Our Jarl who has so many things in mind,
And must care for us all, and must aye be
Where'er 'tis needful, and who must, you know,
Care for us all, and ever has, do ye see,
So many things in mind—so, don't ye see,
One cannot find it wrong in him at all,
If he who has so many things in's head,
And must aye be where'er 'tis needful—and—
He is not to be blamed——

LEIF.

I understand.

KARKER.

Moreover, tell me truly, my good Leif,
Upon your conscience, if you now were Jarl,
And could do all that seemed to you good,
Would yet not do all that you found was good?

LEIF.

Yes; all I found was good: but not therefore
All that I found was ill.

KARKER.

Great Thor! found ill!

One straight can hear that you are newly come,

And never yet have heard our wise lord's words ;
 Else would you know that such a man as he,
 Who has so many, many things in's head,
 And who must be wherever needful 'tis,
 And who must think and see after us all,
 That he——

LEIF.

Yes, Karker, yes : I understand.

KARKER [*offended at being interrupted*].

So : then, let's hear what you do understand !

LEIF.

Thou meanest that a hero who doth watch
 O'er all the land's sons, during the long day,
 With the land's daughters needs must sleep at night.

KARKER.

Most naturally, yes ; it is but right. [*Exeunt.*]

EINAR TAMBESKIALVER

[*Having entered during the foregoing scene, has sat in the back ground, on the stump of a tree, and been employed in setting his bow in order : when the Thralls go out, he rises and looks towards the opposite side.*]

Who standeth yonder on the path ? By Thor !
 It is Jarl Hakon—'tis the Klada Jarl,
 Who cometh from the ship. Now will I play
 A trick upon him ! I have heard men say
 That nothing e'er was known to frighten him.

[*He draws and shoots out of the scene.*]

Ha ! Ha ! I shot the plume from off his helm.

HAKON

*[rushing in, incensed, with drawn sword,
seizes EINAR by the breast].*

Now, hireling villain ! Straight confess, and tell
What have they promis'd thee for Hakon's life ?

EINAR *[calmly.]*

Nothing, my lord, and nothing do I need.
I am no villain either,—I am born
Of noble race ; thou know'st my kindred well.

HAKON.

Who art thou, wretch ? And who and what thy kin ?

EINAR.

My father is named Manhood : my lord Jarl,
Thou knowest him well ; he is an ancient man,
But vigorous withal ; his beard is thick,
His arm is strong ; he hath for long time dwelt
On the Norsk mountains.

HAKON.

Manhood, villain ? Die !

EINAR *[holds HAKON's arm firmly].*

I thank the gods, who gave me strength to hold
The arm and sword of the bold Hakon Jarl ;
There else had been an end of me.

HAKON.

What witch,
What curst enchantress, gave thine arm such
strength ?

EINAR.

My mother gave it me. Most true, she is

A witch, as thou dost call her, noble sir !
But still, she is not wrinkled : she is red
And white, as milk and blood : her name is
 Health,
She is, as thou, of old Norwegian race.

HAKON.

Now, thou shalt die !

EINAR.

 I am too young, lord Jarl ;
I have but little more than twenty years,
And thou wilt be the loser, noble sir,
If thou dost kill old Norway's bravest sons.

HAKON.

Wretch ! wouldst thou not have kill'd me even
 now ?

EINAR.

By Odin and the lovely Freia, no !
I would but shoot the plume from off thy helm,
And nothing else.

HAKON.

And for thy practice, thou
Dost choose the head of Hakon as a but !

EINAR.

His helm's plume, my good lord ; but his helm's
 plume.
It pleased me to frighten Hakon Jarl :
They say 'tis no light matter so to do,
Therefore I shot the feather from thy crest.

The wound can soon be heal'd; 'twill cost no
more

Than a cock's tail, at most. Now do but hold
Within thy fingers a small silver coin,
And if I shoot it not away without
Thy hand receiving scratch, call me a fool,
And hang me up upon the highest tree.

HAKON.

Boy, I believe thee! Truth is in thine eye.
On the white bark of yonder weeping birch
There is a spot minute and black; if thou
Canst shoot so that thine arrow pierce that mark,
And therein remain fix'd, then will I, boy,
Believe thy tale is true.

EINAR [*aims and shoots*].

Believe me then!

HAKON.

Thou art a wondrous marksman. Thou shalt be
Aye near me. I am glad I met with thee.
There is a youth extoll'd throughout the land
As its best bowman: I have sent for him.
Now when he cometh shall he find that we
Have also bowmen here.

EINAR.

Let him but come!

I'll shoot with him! His name?

HAKON.

Einar Tambeskiilver.

EINAR.

So am I also call'd. But let him come !

HAKON.

What? Thou?—

Art thou Einar Tambeskialver ?

EINAR.

Ay, my lord !

The first. Now to the other bring me straight,
—And we will prove which hath the higher
rank.

HAKON.

Ha ! Sportive boy ! Lighthearted, valiant youth !
So thou art come to Klada ?

[*Takes him under the chin.*]

Though so young,

So strong ! How handsome ! and so confident.
Warriors like him are after mine own heart.
Say, dost desire to serve the Klada Jarl ?

EINAR.

If I can serve thee, joyfully I will.
But all in Norway is as peaceful now
As at an old wife's chimney-nook.

HAKON.

Not all :

All is not quite as peaceful as dost deem.
I need strong men and true : and even now
I sail with all my ships to guard the coast
Against a foreign—ay ! a dangerous, foe—

Will Einar sail with us, and bend his bow
For Hakon's safety and his own renown ?

EINAR.

Most willingly, my lord ! But help me, Thor !
Thou hast a splendid bow ! inlaid with gold
And silver ; look at mine ; it is but made
Of wood and the tough sinews of the bear.

HAKON

[*taking it from his shoulders and giving it to EINAR.*]
Take this bow, Einar ; keep it as a gage
Of Hakon's friendship.

EINAR [*proving its strength*].

Ah ! It is too weak.

All, all too weak. Take it again, my lord ;
It is too heavy, and yet far too weak.
My own is better.

HAKON.

Ha ! proud boy ! dost thou
Despise the gift of Hakon ?

EINAR.

Hakon hath
Something that Einar would accept with pride,
Were it but offer'd him.

HAKON.

And what is that ?

EINAR.

Thou hast a daughter, Jarl ! a lovely flower,—
But of this we can afterwards discourse.

HAKON.

And dost believe —

EINAR.

That I shall Berglioth win.

HAKON.

Thou aimest at a far exalted mark.

EINAR.

So should a noble bowman.—Thou hast seen

My arrows can attain a distant mark.—

But there are also arrows of the eye.

HAKON.

Is thy bolt shot ?

EINAR.

Ah ! that will Einar tell

When he hath slain a throng of Hakon's foes.—

But to the strand, my lord !

HAKON.

Art thou prepared ?

EINAR [*touches his quiver*].

I bear my household goods upon my back.

Haste : to the strand, my lord !

HAKON.

Brave boy ! Wert thou

A woman, Hakon could not like thee more.

EINAR.

That is the last I would desire to be.

[*Exeunt.*]

A PEASANT'S DWELLING.

ORM *sits with his bride* GUDRUN *at the top of the board,* BERGTHOR *beside them; on the other side sit* ASKRID *with her betrothed* THORVALD: *many Bondas.*

BERGTHOR.

Now, happy children, let the horn go round !
Spare not the mead !—'tis good as it is old.
The day I held my bridal with Gundlöda,
I in the cellar set the cask myself,
And took a vow that it should not be touch'd
Until my eldest daughter's bridal day.
My friends, ye see that I have kept my vow.—
In our old age we relish happiness.
Is not the maiden lovely, my good Orm ?
She is but nine months younger than the mead.
It was not long, in truth, ere Gundlöda
Made me a present of a daughter. Ah !
I well remember, when I saw thee first,
I was so angry, I nigh cursed thee :
I railed at my poor wife, as she lay,
And cried out : Woman ! what foul trick is this ?
What want I with a daughter ? Give me sons,

Whom I can teach weapons to forge and wield!—
So cast the little fool into her cradle.

ORM.

But, father, soon the girl grew dear to thee.

BERGTHOR.

I know not how it was : but soon she crept
Around me, play'd about——And when girls get
Into their fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth year,
We feel affection for them, if we will,
Or if we will not ; there's no help for it.

ORM.

The old man is right blythe of heart to-night.
Come, Thorvald ! Let the horn again be filled !
We have not drank as yet.

THORVALD.

What, Orm ! not drank ?
'Twill soon be with me as with Fiölnar,
And he was drowned in a but of mead.

BERGTHOR.

Hush, children ! Hark ! what noise is that
without ?

THORVALD.

More friends—more guests, who come to wish us
joy !

[STEIN and a throng of armed Thralls enter.]

What will ye, friends ? What is your business
here ?

STEIN.

We are Jarl Hakon's thralls, and are sent here
To inform the peasants of our lord's desire.

ORM.

If he has learnt we are assembled here,
And profits by this opportunity,
Speak freely now. Ready we are to hear.

STEIN.

That ye so numerous were gather'd here
'Tis true our master, the great Jarl, knew not,
Though he knew here a bridal feast was held.

ORM.

What is your errand? Tell us it at once.

STEIN.

Shortly and plainly then, our Jarl has sent
With friendly greeting to Orm Lyrgia:
He knows thee, and considers thee as one
Who to his lord is dutiful and true:
Our Jarl hath seen thy bride; she hath inflam'd
His breast with love, and her he must possess:
This, his desire, to conquer hath he striven
In vain: the thought a subject should enjoy
What he doth vainly wish and sigh for is
Not to be borne. He, therefore, hopes thou wilt
Resign unto him thy betrothed.

BERGTHOR [*rising*].

What?

ORM.

And do ye come to rob me of my bride ?

STEIN.

Not to rob thee ; if, as the Jarl doubts not,
Thou dost resign her of thine own good will ;
A short time merely wilt thou have to wait,
And Gudrun shall be kindly then return'd,
Accompanied with presents and much gold.

ORM.

And darest thou, vile slave, to utter this ?
And such an offer, such a base request,
Dares Hakon make to free high-minded Norsk-
men ?

STEIN.

Full many a bridegroom, proud and free as thou,
Has been o'erjoy'd to grant the Jarl's request.
We hoped to find you here with but a few
Good trusty friends. That now the message comes
Somewhat abruptly is most true ; but there
Are two good reasons why : in the first place,
The Jarl has sail'd from Klada ; furthermore,
Thou hastenest to conclude thy bridal, Orm ;
And this annoys the Jarl as thou mayst think ;
Therefore hath he commanded us to bring
The beauteous Gudrun with us to his house,
And guard her until he returneth home.
What man will dare to censure the Jarl's deeds !
He is exalted over all men's blame.

[General tumult.]

BERGTHOR.

It goes too far. Away!—Away! I say!—
Away, base slaves!

THORVALD

[takes a drinking horn and drinks].

Go, greet your lord, and tell,
That Thorvald his grave-öl hath drunk.

MANY VOICES.

Down! down!

Hew down the slaves of Hakon!

STEIN *[to the other thralls]*.

To your arms!

THORVALD.

Dare wretches such as ye fight with free men?

ALL.

Cut them down!

BERGTHOR.

Here have I forged me
Of the best steel this heavy axe: each time
I wield and strike with it, four slaves shall fall.

STEIN *[to the other thralls]*.

Courage, lads! courage!

THE BONDAS.

Down with the base slaves!

*[They fight; after some resistance HAKON's
Thralls flee, the Bondas follow in pursuit:
GUDRUN, who has fainted, is surrounded by
the Women, who endeavour to restore her.]*

ASKRID.

My sister ! Ah ! my sister ! Come to life !
They are all fled ; there are no slaves here now.

[*The men return, ORM observing his bride's state,
throws himself at her feet.*]

ORM.

Restore my bride to life ! Why stand ye there,
And moan and weep ? Where now is all your
árt ?

Give me my bride again !

THORVALD.

Now do I swear

By the great god of hosts in Klidskialf ! Here
Do I uplift my sword with slave's blood soil'd—
With the base blood of Hakon's friends,—and
swear

By Odin ! and by all that holy is !
I will not rest until I mix his blood
With that of the vile thralls ; and so avenge
The shame which he designed to do my brother !

BERGTHOR.

And I, though old and stiff, I also swear,
E'en on this battle-axe's bloody edge,
That I will be reveng'd for this vile work.
He would that I should hammer him a crown ?
Ha ! we will hammer him ! I eldest am
Of ye, my brothers, and the maiden's father.

Behold! how like a blighted flower she lies
In her young bridegroom's arms! Assemble ye
Around her, brother bondas: and now swear
On this, my large and heavy battle-axe,
Hakon the wicked's fall.

ORM.

Gudrun! my love!—

Ah! Her eyes open!

ALL THE BONDAS

[laying their hands on the axe].

Hakon Jarl shall die!

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT THE THIR D.

THE ISLAND OF MOSTER.

JOSTEIN, CARLSHOVED, GRIB.

GRIB.

Ay, sirs, in truth 'tis even as I tell:
Jarl Hakon has already landed here,
His ships lie in the Fiord, below the isle,
Behind the forest, on the other side.

CARLSHOVED.

And met not Olaf, as he sailed out
To bring his fleet in safety to the harbour?
'Tis wonderful!—E'en now we wait the king.

GRIB.

Night and Jarl Hakon's wit did favour him.

JOSTEIN.

So the Norwegian leader is prepared
Sternly to greet the king when he essays
To make a landing? 'Tis a fitting field
For the great contest.

GRIB.

True, a greeting is
Destin'd for Olaf: but for such a strife
No large and noble island is requir'd;
An open field would never serve our end.

A murky, sombre forest like we more ;
And such I ween we have on either side.

CARLSHOVED.

Thou speakest darkly, thrall. What meanest thou?

GRIB.

By the high will of the most holy gods,
My master's falsehood has been turn'd to truth :
But then this truth has naturally changed
The current of the Jarl's and his designs.

JOSTEIN.

Audacious slave ! How dar'st thou speak to us
In such a tone ?

GRIB.

I hope ye both will hold
The selfsame language when ye know the truth.

CARLSHOVED.

Speak plainly.

GRIB.

Know, then : Scarcely was the Jarl
From Klada gone, ere a light fishing skiff
O'ertook him as he lay-to, it being late,
When off the islands. Tiding by it came
That a conspiracy had just arisen
Among the Trondhiem `bondas, for the sake
Of a fair maid, whom, as it is his wont,
He wish'd to make his mistress. From the force
With which the flame burst forth, 'twas seen the
fire

Had in the ashes long lain smouldering.
What now was to be done? Ye know the Jarl
Decideth promptly. Quickly he resolv'd,
That 'twas of more importance to proceed
Against a valiant, powerful, hostile chief,
Than 'gainst a mob of peasants; that his fame
Would be increased by the victory,
And so the bondas be o'eraw'd. But when
He had sail'd farther out, and sent off spies,
He learnt to his confusion that the fleet
Of Olaf was far larger than report
Had led him to believe or ere he sail'd.
What now was to be done? To Moster come,
He found here straightway Thorer, his right hand.
'Tis known that nought can make the Jarl despair;
If one thing fails another must be tried.
My worthy master's project was approved:—
"Necessity compelleth me! It is
The cause of the high gods!"—Such were his
words;
But well I wot, 'twas for his own sake too
He wish'd the unwelcome guest were got rid of.
Our Jarl was in some danger: were it known
How the case stood, that Trygyve's son were here,
Affection for the ancient royal race
And hatred toward the Jarl, together join'd,
Would make his state nigh hopeless. What
to do?—

He let his men here pitch their tents ; they knew
But little ; he had made them all believe
It was a rover he had come to seek.

JOSTEIN.

And what has he determin'd ?

GRIB.

Oh ! I have,

Through many a sleepless night with bitter tears,
Ask'd the high gods, from my hard couch of
straw,

Why they had cast my lot and set my life
In the abhorr'd condition of a slave ?
I thank ye now, all-wise, almighty gods !
For were it not so, Thorer's vile design
Too late had been discover'd when the blood
Of the young, guileless Olaf had been shed.

JOSTEIN.

Keep us no longer in suspense, but speak !

GRIB.

I heard it ; I was near him : I'm his slave,
A poor, a lowly, despicable thrall,
Who followeth his master like a dog,
Unnoticed, unobserved ;—why heed him ?
But to be brief : into yon sombre wood
Shall Olaf be decoy'd by Thorer Klake,
Under the guise of friendship, and there—slain !
Jarl Hakon waiting in a hut the while
Thorer's return with the wan sever'd head :

Then hastes he to the mainland. Rogaland
Is faithful to him still; there will he raise
An army and destroy these foreign troops.
When they attempt to avenge their young king's
death.

JOSTEIN.

And this thou heard'st?

GRIB.

By the good Baldur, yes!
As true as that my heart is free from crime!

JOSTEIN.

And we should aid such villany as this?

CARLSHOVED.

And we have lent ourselves to such a plot?

JOSTEIN.

Oh, Grib, I am asham'd, o'erwhelm'd with shame!

GRIB.

Nay, sir! as soon as thou dost truly feel
Ashamed of thyself, thou hast no cause
In truth to be asham'd. Who could have deem'd
So brave a warrior capable of this?
Jarl Hakon hath a falcon-eye; its glance
Is a command: it fix'd on ye, my lords,—
And ye were his.—How great, indeed, to be
The chosen Kampers of the mighty Hakon!
Ye have the consciousness within your breast—
We, we have rais'd that hero to the throne!—
This led ye.

JOSTEIN.

From the throne shall he now fall !

CARLSHOVED.

As truly as young Olaf is the son
Of Askrid, from the throne shall Hakon fall.

GRIB.

Now is the cause a good, a noble one !
But lo ! the ships draw nearer to the shore ;
The king doth land ! yonder I see his bark.
Whate'er is done must speedily be done :
As soon as ye meet Olaf, tell him all.
My master's in the forest with the Jarl :
Did Olaf with his warriors hasten there,
They might be straight entrapp'd in their own
snare.

Happen what may, the power is Olaf's now ;
Perchance shall nothing of all this take place.
—But hark ! Do ye not hear the beauteous
tones

Arising from the ship ? The peaceful song !
How sweetly o'er the waters is it borne !
Farewell ! now must I to my master haste.—
Do not forget what ye have promised.

JOSTEIN.

No : be assur'd !

CARLSHOVED.

The ship has anchored.
Lo ! where king Olaf landeth with his men,

And all the monks : they give into his hand
The blood-red banner with the snow-white cross.

JOSTEIN.

The blood-red ground betokens bravery,
The white, the purity of Christ his faith.
But they approach—come, let us draw aside !

[*Exeunt.*

KING OLAF *enters with the great banner in his hand, followed by his Warriors and the Monks, the latter sing the following :*

Cœli Deus sanctissimus !
Qui lucidas mundi plagas
Candore pingis igneo,
Augens decoro lumine ;

Infunde nunc Piissime !
Donum perennis gratiæ ;
Fraudis novæ ne casibus
Nos error alterat vetus.

Expelle noctem cordium !
Absturge sordes mentium !
Resolve culpæ vinculum !
Everte moles criminum !

O tu, sole serenior,
Et balsamo suavior,
Veni, veni, Rex optime !
Pater immensæ gloriæ !

[*When represented, the following may be substituted.*

Far, far, shall the dark night be driven,
By thy life-giving light, O Heaven !
The last murk cloud that veils the sky,
With thunder from thy dome shall fly.

The north shall feel the warming ray
Of thy benign, effulgent day.
Thy champion, by thy grace made strong,
Shall overcome the powers of wrong !]

OLAF

[*raises the banner, and strikes its staff firmly
in the ground*].

Here do I plant, deeply in Norway's ground,
The Christian banner. As a vigorous tree
Amid the stones shall its strong roots shoot
forth,

And it shall blossom and bear richest fruit—
Ay, heart-rejoicing, blest, life-giving fruit !
With holy longings, with contrition's tears
Its roots shall water'd be ; and gentle sighs,
Like the benign health-teeming breath of spring,
Shall waken and mature the quickening sap.
From it, as song of birds, the sacred voice
Of adoration shall ascend to heaven,
And as an oak no storm can ever mar,
The tree its vigorous branches shall expand
O'er my lov'd fatherland. Beneath its shade

Shall friendship, love, and peace together dwell,
And from the parent-stem smile sweetly forth
In the calm evening beam. In its pure bark
The kings of Norway shall inscribe their names.
The flowers of innocence shall grow around,
And as heaven's little ministers hold watch,
Keeping afar the phantoms of the night.
Frighten'd from Christianity's blest tree,
Shall Odin, with his single, guileful eye,
Fly to the Orkneys, to the barren hills,
And there make fruitless, impotent essay
To repossess himself of his lost power.
There raging, like a wounded wolf, he'll howl;
But the tree's leaves shall like pure angel's wings
Waft off the obscene sorcerer's dire spells,
That they fright not the children of the land,
Who 'neath the foliage sweetly, calmly sleep.

THE MONKS.

Amen !

OLAF.

I thank ye, holy brethren, that ye thus
Confirm my words. O, do ye call to mind,
When lately we sailed past Stord Island? There
Was Hakon Athelstein, when summoned
Unto the battle from the festive board—
Unto the fight in which he nobly died.
O, Hakon, noble Hakon ! Foster-son
Of Athelstein, dear is thy name to me !

Ah ! thou wast blighted, as the tender flower
That blooms too early, by the frosts of night :
Thy gentle roots had not the strength to pierce
The cold and rocky mountains of the north ;
Yet it was thou who planted the first shoot :
O, be thou therefore blessed in the heavens !
There, there thou art, though thou hadst not the
power

To combat error. Ay : thou wast constrain'd
To taste the flesh of horses ; forced thy lips,
Longing to cleave to the communion-cup,
To touch the brim of the foul offering bowl.
The time was then not come, thou noble mind !
Now smilest thou on Olaf from the skies,
While he doth dauntlessly pursue thy steps.

THE MONKS.

Amen !

OLAF.

Thanks, holy brethren, thanks ! and now, I pray,
Go rest ye after your fatigues.—Our men
Have raised a tent already in the ship ;
Go, holy brethren—go, in heaven's peace !
[*The monks depart, OLAF remains with his warriors.*

Enter CARLSHOVED and JOSTEIN.

OLAF.

Now, my good kinsmen, valiant brethren !
Will ye, as true friends, stand or fall with me ?

JOSTEIN.

My lord and king !

CARLSHOVED.

King Olaf !

OLAF.

Ha ! What now ?

JOSTEIN [*kneeling*].

Take, take the lives which we have forfeited !

CARLSHOVED [*also kneeling*].

Yes ! Take our lives, my lord !

OLAF.

What meaneth this ?

JOSTEIN.

We have betrayed thee !

CARLSHOVED.

Betrayed thee !

OLAF.

Impossible ! What ! Ye betray me ? How ?

Was all an artifice ? And am I brought

Into Jarl Hakon's toils ?

CARLSHOVED.

Fear not, my lord !

OLAF.

I fear not hell, still less this Hakon Jarl.

Rise up ! why kneel ye unto me ? Go kneel

Before the God whose wrath ye have incurr'd !

CARLSHOVED.

My noble Olaf, Thorer vilely lied !

Yet all that he related was the truth.

JOSTEIN.

For Hakon's tyranny hath turn'd to truth
That which was but invented to deceive.

OLAF.

The land is in revolt ?

CARLSHOVED.

My lord, it is.

OLAF.

And Hakon ?

JOSTEIN.

Here.

OLAF.

Here ?

CARLSHOVED.

With a few ships
Which could not stand a moment 'gainst thy fleet.

OLAF.

What will he then ?

JOSTEIN.

With treachery attempt
What openly he hop'd he could have done ;
Thorer is a base traitor ; 'tis his part
To bring thee to the forest's gloomiest grove
And give thee thy death wound.

OLAF.

Is Hakon Jarl

Now in the forest ? Thorer comes alone !—
What force has Hakon ?

JOSTEIN.

Not so great as thine.

All will be done with greatest secrecy ;
For Hakon is in truth as much afraid
Of his own warriors as he is of thine.
The men of Norway must not know thou 'rt here ;
The evil then would be indeed increased.
Hakon is hiding in a peasant's hut ;
And in the forest Thorer may be found :
Let all thy warriors follow thee, that so
Thou mayst have forces to oppose the Jarl's.

OLAF.

How can I understand thy dark discourse ?
Or what assureth me ye now are true ;
Ye, who e'en now confess'd your treachery ?

JOSTEIN.

'Tis that confession should assure thee, sire,
That we are truly free from this vile plot.
It was the Jarl's design to fight with thee.
He bade us follow Thorer Klake here,
In order to detain thee till he came.
'Tis the Norwegian custom to seek war :
He was our lord : his cunning and deceit
Decoy'd our youthful minds to his designs.
Thou art our kinsman ; but we look'd on thee
As the disturber of great Hakon's peace :
We went. Meanwhile the case was alter'd,

And with it the design of Hakon Jarl.
So soon his treachery was known to us
Did we acquaint thee of it. Our deceit,
Our foolish confidence in such a wretch,
Deserveth punishment. I bade thee take
My life—here, take it; but distrust me not!

OLAF.

Why should I take thy life, brave youth? 'Tis
thine

To use for good: see that thou use it well!

CARLSHOVED.

O, noble-minded Olaf!

JOSTEIN.

Then believe

I speak the truth, and follow me! But if
Thou dost distrust me, go unto thy ships.—
But is't not Thorer stealing through those trees.
Follow'd by Grib?

OLAF.

Yonder I see the rest

Of my brave warriors landing. I'll command
That they surround the isle. A little while,
And Hakon and his followers are ta'en.

[*To his men.*]

With drawn sword through the forest follow me!
Prepare yourselves to hunt the savage lynx!

[*Exeunt.*]

THORER KLAKE and GRIB enter quickly from another quarter, the former with a basket and dagger.

THORER.

There went he ! Ay : there went he with his flock,

To take his ease in Norway's summer-grass.

Ah, Olaf ! haste thee not so much ! There comes

A long, long rest, ere thou expectest it.

Now, Grib, dost understand what I told thee ?

GRIB.

Ay, every word, my master, perfectly.

THORER.

This dagger must thou thrust into his heart

While he sits by me.

GRIB.

Well, dear master, well !

THORER.

When he is dead thou must cut off his head

And lay it in this basket, and then go

With me to where Jarl Hakon waits for us.

He straight will give thee freedom and will bind

A glove upon thy thigh.

GRIB.

Well—worthy sir !

THORER.

Think of the honour that thou shalt enjoy !

Think it is thine to kill this warrior ;

This Olaf, who contends with Valhal's power,
Him shalt thou slay ! Think, in some hundred
years,

Thy name will stand in ancient histories,
And men will praise thee as they read, and say
That deed was done by noble-minded Grib.

GRIB.

I'm all impatience, my good master ! Long
Have I desir'd to achieve some noble deed,
Which would exalt me from my lowly state.

THORER.

I know it, and now is thy time, good Grib !
Dost see this sharp and polish'd dagger, Grib ?
It glanceth like the moonbeams on the waves :
See, how 'tis pointed. See, how sharp it is !

GRIB.

'Tis a good blade !

THORER.

Yet, Grib, that is not all :
Thou seest indeed but half its qualities :
Now mark well in the steel this little groove
Which goes unto the point.

GRIB.

I mark it well.

THORER [*smiles mysteriously*].

So narrow as it is, 'tis yet the way
To Helheim, Grib ! [*Looks around.*]

There is none here but us ?

GRIB.

None, none. 'Twas nothing but a hungry fox
That howl'd upon the hill.

THORER.

Ha, that doth howl
For prey ! But now mark well this narrow groove
Running from hilt to point ! Seest thou the hilt
Is hollow ? And this spring—dost understand ?

GRIB.

No, my good sir.

THORER.

'Tis true such things as this,
So cunningly devised, are little known
As yet in the rude north. In Italy
I bought this dagger, saying to myself,
Who knows what use this may be put to ?

GRIB.

Right !

THORER.

Good Grib, full often hast thou seen, I wot,
A wounded warrior who, in spite of wounds,
Has lived, recover'd, and been strong again ?

GRIB.

Full often, sir.

THORER.

But, though a thrust be given
Strongly and sure, how little can we trust
To the arm's strength !

GRIB.

Yet if the arm be strong?

THORER.

What—the arm strong? Ah! what is human
strength!

But dost perceive?—This dagger in the hilt
Is filled with a rare and precious juice,
Which flows into the wound the point has made,
And so congeals the blood.

GRIB.

I understand—

I understand it now—'tis poison.

THORER.

Hush!

Cry not so loudly!—Thou canst take it now:
But see that thou art careful. Thou art wont
To handle weapons.

GRIB

[weighs the dagger in his hand].

Master, I have got
A strange desire.—Canst thou imagine what?

THORER.

No, Grib! Thy looks are wild. What is thy
wish?

GRIB.

To plunge this dagger into thine own breast.

THORER.

Grib! art thou mad?

GRIB.

Good sir, be not afraid !
Thou well canst think I did but jest with thee.

THORER.

But such a jest !

GRIB.

Dost think that for a jest
It was too rude ?

THORER.

Ay, Grib, 'twas far too rude ;
And 'tis not now a proper time to jest.

GRIB.

Then will we go most seriously to work.—
Dost howl again, wild fox ? Here ! take thy
prey !

[Strikes the dagger into THORER's breast.]

THORER.

Oh ! wretched villain ! Thou hast pierced my
heart ! *[Falls.]*

GRIB.

That is not true. What callest thou thy heart—
The cold, hard lump of flesh in thy left side ?—
Dost thou give it that honorable name ?
It never felt before : how can it feel
A dagger-stab ? It is not possible.

THORER.

Traitor !

GRIB.

Thou nam'st thyself.

THORER.

Ah ! 'tis too true !

[*Dies.*]

GRIB.

Thou shouldst have ponder'd o'er that truth
before ;

'Tis now too late. There lies he in his gore.

[*Gazing on him.*]

Where is thy subtlety and cunning, now ?
Canst thou not light upon some clever scheme
To staunch the blood ?—How foolishly he lies,
His nose towards the clouds, senseless and dumb !
And his whole life's deep art cannot avail
To hinder him from sinking into hell.

OLAF, CARLSHOVED, JOSTEIN, *Warriors.*

OLAF

[*to GRIB—with drawn sword*].

Where is thy master, thrall ?

GRIB [*points to the corpse*].

There, there he lies.

OLAF.

What ! Thorer Klake weltering in his blood !

GRIB.

He saileth down the river Aga's stream
To Helheim.

OLAF.

Who hath kill'd him ?

GRIB.

Noble king !

He kill'd himself with his own villany.

OLAF.

Explain thy meaning, thrall !

GRIB.

He tempted me
To plunge this dagger in thy breast, my lord ;
Thor knoweth why ! 'tis likely he felt loath
To murder thee with his own hand.

OLAF.

What more ?

GRIB.

He placed th' empoison'd dagger in my hand ;
I should have thrust it into Olaf's breast,
But I mistook and thrust it into his.
Now lies he stupidly upon the ground,
And doth not speak a word. Before, his tongue
Ran fast enough, the while his small, red eyes,
Glanced sharp and cunning, ever on the watch,
Never at rest : now do they seem to rest ;
But dull and dim they stare, as if through horn.
Ah, Olaf, thou canst not believe, how soon
My master hath his nature changed.

OLAF.

Bold thrall !

GRIB.

Could Thorer speak, he would confirm my words:
He promis'd me that I should be made free,
And bear a spear and shield, and should drink
 mead,
Sitting with warriors in the king's high hall,
If I achieved well the deed of death:
But, sire, I deemed it was all too dear
To purchase Hakon's mead with Olaf's blood.

OLAF.

Oh, noble mind! Say, doth thy heart incline
To follow Olaf as thy chief? Wilt thou
Fight, ever truly, faithfully for him,
And, as the object of his friendship, sit
Among his chosen warriors?

GRIB [*moved*].

Ah! now melts

My pride in this unwonted flood of joy.
This offer mine? Is then the hour arriv'd
When I shall burst the bonds of slavery?
Forgive me, that I thus weep as a child!

OLAF.

Yet wast thou offer'd freedom by thy Jarl.

GRIB.

Freedom! What freedom? Is it to be free,
To buy the body's freedom with the soul's?
To lose the name of slave, but to become,
In truth, a tenfold more debased slave?

OLAF.

Thine is a Christian heart ! Give me thy hand !
What is thy name ?

GRIB.

Grib was my name, as thrall.

OLAF.

Be thy name Griffin. Bear upon thy shield
A Griffin vanquishing a serpent.

GRIFFIN.

Ha !

The serpent is vile Thorer. O, my king !
By Odin ! thou rewardest royally.

OLAF.

Invoke not Odin ! Vain is all his power :
Thou seest his spirit in his worshipper.
Where now is Hakon ?

GRIFFIN.

Yonder in the wood :

He hides him with his slave in a poor hut,
And there awaiteth Thorer with thy head.
But I will cut off Thorer's head, my lord ;
And thou canst bring it unto Hakon Jarl,
Instead of Thorer bringing to him thine.

OLAF.

Nay, Griffin ! nay ! Respect the dead ! Go,
men,
And bury this dead body.

GRIFFIN.

Bury it
Among the nettles : tis a fitting spot.

OLAF.

Beside yon elder bushes ; that their pale
And mournful flowers may fall upon his grave.
Griffin, be not hard hearted ; bear not hate
Unto the dead !

GRIFFIN.

But teach me my good lord,
And what I should be, I will soon become.

OLAF.

Now follow me in silence to the Jarl.

GRIFFIN.

We must go this way, then, my noble king.

[*Exeunt.*

A LONELY SPOT IN THE FOREST.

A PEASANT'S HUT.

HAKON JARL, KARKER.

HAKON.

Hast thou fulfill'd my bidding ?

KARKER.

Ay, lord Jarl !
I told them in the ship that thou hadst gone
Unto the birch-tree grove, a while to rest

Beneath the shade, and taste a cooler air ;
As 'twas too hot, at noonday, on the sea :
For then there are two suns,—one in the sky
And t'other in the sea : but on the land
We are but plagued with one : therefore thou'dst
gone.

HAKON.

Didst tell them also here I'd take my meal ?

KARKER.

That canst thou reckon on, lord Jarl ! For when
Did I forget my food ? Oh ! eating is
The first and greatest happiness on earth ;
Though drinking may, in truth, more needful be.
I told them, that the Jarl would take his meat
Up in the grove ; for on the sea the ship
Kept rocking up and down, and he might come
To choke himself, by swallowing the wrong way.

HAKON.

Good, Karker, good ! thou art a witty lad.
Go, help the thrall who cooks. I'd be alone.
When Thorer Klake comes, or Thorer's thrall,
Tell him to enter here immediately.

KARKER.

Good, my lord Jarl ! I will take care 'tis so. [*Exit.*]

HAKON.

Would that I had but many more such slaves,
Then were I safe where'er I went. A dog
Is not more trusty, and not nigh so strong ;

And then the knave can speak. A useful tool,
A proper weapon in my hand, the which
I'd not exchange, no, not for the best sword.

[*Sits himself.*]

The others, with sharp eyes and wily words,
One cannot trust. Albeit Thorer—Thorer!
Hast greeted Olaf? Hast thou sent him off
Unto his gods?

[*Leans his head on his hand, and ponders.*]

It was not my design—
It came from Thorer. Thorer his own deeds
Must answer for to Odin—and in truth
Odin will not be wroth. What? Should this fool
Go unopposed in his course, to throw
The gods from their high seats? This Olaf would
Bereave not only Hakon of his power,
But also heaven of its. So let him fall!
The evil must be remedied in time;
And it is time! Ay 'tis, indeed, high time!
My hair grows grey; but soon, ye silvery locks,
Shall ye be cover'd with a golden crown.
The maidens, jesting, mock'd me formerly,
For mine was black instead of golden hair;
A little time, and golden shall it be.
Who cometh here? It must be Thorer Klake:
He promised to bring me Olaf's head;—
My eyes refuse to gaze upon it now.

[*Remains in his former position.*]

OLAF TRYGVESON *enters, wrapt in a grey cloak,
with a hat which conceals his face.*

HAKON [*without turning*].

My valiant Thorer Klake, art thou come?
Have all things favour'd thee? And bringest thou
What thou didst promise me? Say, Thorer, say!

OLAF.

All things have happen'd as they should, sir Jarl!
But excuse Thorer that he does not come,
And bring thee with his own hands Olaf's head:
'Twas difficult for him. Thor knows he had
A kind of loathness to bring it himself,
And so sent me.

HAKON.

Well, well! Go bury it
Deep, deep! I will not look on it myself;
My eyes refuse.—'Twould haunt me in my
dreams.

Bury the corpse, and tell thy master, thrall,
To come to me straight!

OLAF.

Thorer Klake sleeps.

HAKON.

He sleeps?

OLAF.

He lies and takes his mid-day sleep
Beneath some elder bushes, in the shade.

HAKON.

Go wake him, then ! [*Aside*] He sleepeth ! Can
he sleep

After a deed like this ? Thorer, thou hast
A strong heart, indeed ! [*Aloud*] Go wake him,
thrall !

OLAF.

But wilt thou not first look on Olaf's head ?

HAKON.

I told thee I would not !

OLAF.

Perchance thou deem'st
That it appeareth ghastly. Not so, Jarl ;
The head of Olaf is as sound, as fresh,
As any in the land.

HAKON.

Go, go, I say !

OLAF.

Well ! I did think Jarl Hakon was a bold
And valiant warrior ; and he dares not look
Upon a wan and lifeless, sever'd head ?
How wouldst thou tremble if thou didst be-
hold
That head upon the living body.

HAKON [*turns angrily*].

Slave !

Where hast thou it ?

OLAF

[takes off his hat and throws his cloak aside].

Upon my shoulders, Jarl!

Forgive me that I brought it in this wise;
Believe me, 'twas the more commodious far.

HAKON.

Olaf! ha, treachery!

OLAF.

Old man, reserve

Thy heroism for a more fit time!
Attempt no strife with Olaf! Call to mind,
That though he still doth wear his head unharm'd,
Thy wretched baseness, thy foul villany
Striveth alone against that headless chief.

HAKON.

Ha! Well!

[Attacks OLAF.]

OLAF

[disarms HAKON, and says sternly].

This rage availeth nought, old man,
Take up thy sword and sheathe it quietly.
My warriors surround thy house, my ships
Outnumber thine. I now am here to win
The kingdom in an honorable fight.
'Twas thou thyself allur'd me with thy wiles.
Now standest thou an object of contempt,
A slave, caught in the toils which thou didst set.
But I will not avail myself of this,

Nor take a mean advantage of the power
Blind fortune giveth me. No, Hakon, no !
I'll meet thee fairly in the battle-field.
Thy plot hath not succeeded to thy wish ;
Thorer, thy friend, lies bathed in his blood :
'Twas a light task for me to take thee here ;
'Twere e'en a lighter one to kill thee now ;
But, Jarl, I am a Christian, and loathe
Each base and despicable deed. Now choose :
Be Klada Jarl, as formerly, and swear
Fealty to me, or,—fly ! And be assur'd
That when we meet again shall blood be shed.

HAKON [*proudly and calmly*].

The latter do I choose : the latter, king !
Thou callest me a villain and a slave :
Thy words have won a smile of pitying scorn.
Olaf, thou art a boy, and as a boy,
Rashness and love of daring words are thine.
Look in my eyes ! Mark well my brow ! Hast
thou

Seen such a glance shoot from a slavish eye ?
Or deemest thou that cowardice and deceit
Lurk in the furrows traced on this brow ?
I let thee be decoy'd ? Assuredly :
I knew full well there wanted but a sign
To bring thee fluttering downward to the lure ;
I knew, that in thy soul thou prizedst more
Thy kinship to a died-out race of kings

Than the renowned deeds of Hakon Jarl;
That thou wast watching, and didst but await
The fitting time to mar the old man's peace.
Can it surprise thee that I rather chose
To bring the evil to a crisis straight,
Than patiently to sit and wait thy time?
Can it surprise thee that I did deceive
A fanatic who scorns th' almighty gods?
And canst thou be surpris'd that I allow'd
My follower's attempt against the life
Of one who strove to o'erthrow not me alone
But Valhal's power?

OLAF.

Hakon ! dost call to mind,
Thou, e'en thou, wast a Christian ? Wast baptiz'd
By Bishop Popo ? That thou since didst break
Thy sacred oath ?—How many hast thou broken ?

HAKON.

Cursed for ever may the moment be,
When, blinded by a wily, cunning monk,
I let myself be fooled by a trick !
Well could he take the red-hot iron up,
When his hand was anointed with a salve
Some witch had made.

OLAF.

Alas ! thou blind old man !
I feel compassion for thy silvery hairs.

HAKON.

Spare thy compassion ! As thou seest me here
Thou seest the latest gleam, the latest spark
Of old Norwegian strength and warrior life,
Which, stripling ! 'twill be hard for thee to
quench

With thy vain, languid, sickly fever dreams.
Well do I know it is the Christian's wont
To pity, to convert, to render good ;—
Our wont is this : ye to despise and scorn !
To meditate your downfall and your death,
As the enemies of warriors and gods,
And thus doth Hakon ; and in this consists
His villany. By Odin and by Thor !
Thou shalt not quench Norway's heroic fire
With the damp vapours of thy misty dreams !

OLAF.

Well, Hakon ! well ! for this time do we part :
Woe be to thee when next we meet again !

HAKON.

Ay, woe to me, if I then crush thee not !

OLAF.

Th' avenging flames of heaven shall light on thee !

HAKON.

Nay ! Thor the cross will shiver with one blow !

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT THE FOURTH.

KLADA.

HAKON JARL. *A Messenger.*

HAKON.

WHAT are thy tidings? Speak without reserve
As without fear! The bonda chiefs, are they
Leagued together?

MESSENGER.

Ay, my noble lord,
In anger and in vengeance are they leagued.
Orm hath sent messengers to all around,
Calling on every man to take up arms,
And hasten unto Klada, to slay thee.
To Kaldor hath he sent at Skierdingstad,
And he again hath sent the bidding stick
Still farther on. Sigurd, relation of
The beauteous Berglioth, once thy mistress, Jarl,
Hath joined him, with Alf and Skialm from
Rimold,
Who come to avenge their sister Thora's wrongs.
These are the leaders of the bonda troops
Which are assembled now in Orkedal.

HAKON.

Ha! I confide in my good warrior troop:

A few well-arm'd, brave men, wont unto war,
Can scatter easily a peasant flock.

MESSENGER.

Nay, my lord Jarl; their number is too great,
And daily doth increase : anger arms them.

HAKON.

With momentary courage, which, so soon
As Hakon doth appear, will fade away.
What more ? Is Olaf with his fleet arrived ?

MESSENGER.

Yes : he has enter'd into Trondhiem's Fiord.

HAKON.

What ! In the Fiord ! without his being
oppos'd ?
Did Erland, did my son, then, meet him not ?

MESSENGER.

Ah ! my lord Jarl !

HAKON.

Why sighest thou ? Tell me all !

MESSENGER.

This morning Olaf entered the Fiord,
With five long shield-bedecked, fighting ships,—
There was thy son, thy Erland, with but three ;
The others lay afar, deep in the bay.
A mist came on ; so Erland could not make
A signal unto them. At first he thought
These five were thine ; but when they drew more
near,

He saw his error, and would make for land ;
But it was then too late ; into the Fiord
King Olaf's vessels press'd. He took thy son
For thee, lord Jarl, and bade the rowers pull
With double vigour at the labouring oars.
When Erland and his men drew near the shore,
And when their ships did strike the ground, they
sprang

At once into the sea.—What could thy son,
With three small vessels, poorly mann'd, opposed
To five large ships, glitt'ring with steel-clad men ?
He swam beneath the waves, and in this wise
Did seek the shore : but Olaf mark'd him—aye,
He mark'd the shining helmet, which surpass'd
In beauty every other ; and believ'd
That it was thou, my lord, and loudly cried :
“ Hakon, this time thou shalt not 'scape thy
death !

Remember what we said when last we met !
We swore, when we encounter'd, blood should
flow.”

And with these words, king Olaf seized a spear,
And hurl'd it—Oh ! exempt me, my lord Jarl
From telling more—exempt thyself from hearing !

HAKON.

Speak ! speak !—He hurl'd the javelin from his
hand ?

MESSENGER.

And the spear pierced the forehead of thy son,
So that it clove the skull, and strew'd the brains
Upon the wave.

HAKON [*conceals his agony*].

Hast thou aught more to tell?

MESSENGER.

King Olaf was provok'd that 'twas not thou
Whom he had stricken. Many men were slain ;
But some were spared : of them the king did learn
The movement of the bonda chiefs, and how
They are disposed towards thee.

HAKON.

Aught more ?

MESSENGER.

My lord, I've told my grievous tale.

HAKON.

Then go !

[*Exit MESSENGER.*]

Wast angry, Olaf, that thou struck'dst not me ?
Thou never couldst have stricken better. Him,
Him, struck'dst thou not—my Erland struck'dst
thou not :

Ran took him in her motherly embrace
And bore him, the fair youth, unto Valhal :
But Hakon hast thou stricken to the heart.—
Oh ! Erland ! Erland ! Oh ! my son ! my
son !——

Thus moved Hakon? Tears upon thy cheek!
'Tis long since it was thus. O, Hakon Jarl,
Thou'rt growing old, and like a woman
weep'st.—

Oh! he was dear to me—he was the hope
Of my declining years—my fondest hope.
Ah, how are ye all vanished, my dreams!—

[*After a moment of deep thought, exclaims,*]
How? Do dark mists then veil and shroud
Valhal?

Is Odin's golden throne in Klidskialf rusted?
Hath all then lost its glory? Frigga kind,
Art sear'd as a birch tree in harvest time?
Ydun, hath Loki stolen from thee thy fruits?
Where is thy hammer, Thor? Where, Asa-Tyr,
Thy all-o'ercoming, terror-striking hand?—
Say, ye high host, have ye, in darkness wrapt,
The gentle Baldur follow'd to hell?—
Up! Hakon Jarl! Up, old Norwegian chief!
They've called thee a heathen!—term of hate!
Ay, ay, a heathen, Hakon, for thou striv'st
For thine and for thy father's ancient faith.
To arms! to battle! and to victory!—
Yet, oh forgive me, ever holy gods!
That I in my self-love forgot high heaven!
Ye hear—ye hear me!—From this very hour
This life is offer'd unto ye alone.
The gladd'ning dream, that eve's declining sun

Would beam in golden glories on my brow,
Is vanished, and a wild storm arisen,
With mists and clouds which hide the sun's
 blest light ;

And ere the sky its azure can regain,
The stars will twinkle over Hakon's tomb.
Ran took my son, my Erland : Erling still
Is left to me.—But how can I believe
That this young tender shoot will brave his
 fate?——

Hear, ye almighty gods ! hear this my vow !—
By all the gems in Asa-Odin's crown,
The glist'ning stars ;—by Aucthor with his car,
Which turneth downward its bright pole each
 night,—

I swear henceforth to live for ye alone !
If pride seduced me, ah, then forgive,
Thou lovely Saga, thou enchantedst me.
And if 'twere anger, Odin, at my deed,
Did cause a frown to sit upon thy brow,
Demand a sacrifice ! demand whate'er
Thou likest best, and thou shalt have thy
 will !——

[STEIN enters with a gold horn.]

What bringest thou ?

STEIN.

A booty from thy foe.
Thou know'st, lord Jarl, that Olaf dared to send

A troop of masons unto land, to build
By the Fiord side a house, they call a church,
For their new-fangled gods. Thou didst command,
As was most just, that such work should be
stopp'd;

And so we stopp'd it. But before we came,
Found Olaf's men, in digging deep, this horn:
From them we've taken it, and bring it thee.

HAKON.

Well, Stein! and are there many come with thee?

STEIN.

There is a troop of us.

HAKON.

Go to the hall;
And see that every one of ye receive
At least as much mead as this horn could hold.

STEIN.

We'll drink it to thy health, my noble lord.

[*Exit.*]

HAKON.

A noble, ancient offering-horn of gold,
Of purest gold; a rarely, ancient horn.
On that spot stood, undoubtedly, of old
A temple to the high gods of Valhal.
And thereon, Olaf, wouldst thou build thy church,
And thy dark monkish cells?—'Twas well, my
men,
That ye did drive them off; 'twas well, ye gain'd

This treasure from them and did bring it me ;
 'Tis beauteous as 'tis precious. — There are
 Runes

Engraven round the rim. What do they tell ?

[*Reads.*]

“ For thy fault,
 Faileth thee fortune ;
 Go to the high gods,
 Give them the best ! ”

[*HAKON remains long mute with astonishment,
 then reads the verses again, slowly and
 earnestly.*]

—— Give them the best ! ——

Children of Buri and of Bor, ye will
 The best ? And thus your wrath will be appeased.
 I understand the sign, mysterious Skuld !
 I see thee veiled in thy snow-white shroud,
 Sitting beneath the ash-tree Ygdrasil ;
 Thou gazest fixedly on Urdur's stream :
 Say, is the water red ? Doth it crave blood ? —
 The best ! And what is then the best ? My son,
 My Erland fell : — ye have receiv'd the best. —
 But Hakon did not make that offering,
 And he must offer unto ye the best ! —
 In order fortune's favour to rewin,
 Which fail'd him for his fault ; for he forgot
 Valhalla for himself. — Give them the best ! —
 I have a fair, a gentle little boy,

With golden-gleaming hair and heaven-blue eyes,
Pure and unsullied as the morning star,
But gay and sportive as a mountain kid,
Of Hakon's manhood's blood the latest drop;—
Him can this not concern? O, Freia fair,
Thou wouldst not take what thou thyself hast
given?

[*Musing.*]

The gods demand two kinds of sacrifice:
One to exalt their glory and their praise,—
Then oxen fall and vanquish'd foes are slain;
Then the glad flames exulting rise from earth,
And Odin smileth from his heavenly throne:
The other sacrifice is to appease,—
Its fumes Valhalla's wrath do mitigate;
Then bleed our hearts while the pale victim
bleeds;
Perform'd in silence without song or hymn,
This offer'd in atonement doth incline
The gods to mercy and forgiveness.

[*Gazing on the gold horn.*]

And here is graven deeply in the gold
The mandate calm and stern: Give them the
best!

And wherefore was it brought unto me now?
Why in the very moment when I swore
To live for heaven alone? When I avow'd—
But no! no weakness, Hakon! be thyself!

Thorgierdur Horgabrud, thou awful maid.
Who followest warriors to the battle field
On thy white steed, thy garments dyed in blood,
With the sharp sword of death in thy red hand,
For carnage doth thine eye glance anxiously ;
Thou stretchest forth thine arm—thy glave doth
gleam.

Well ! Hakon doth obey : he trembleth not.

[*Exit.*



THE FOREST.

LANGBRAND, GRIFFIN.

LANGBRAND.

My son, tis well I find thee ! Where's the king ?
Whither with that strange old man hath he gone ?

GRIFFIN.

They walk together in the forest still,
And speak the while of this, the while of that ;
The old man, above all, doth often touch,
In an obscure and dark mysterious wise,
On Olaf's enterprise.

LANGBRAND.

I was not there—

What said the old man ? How did he intrude ?

GRIFFIN.

We were just seated at the festive board,
(It being the eve of holy Whitsuntide,)
All gay and joyful, and the king himself
Cheerful beyond his wont ; when an old man
Trode slowly in, and then did seat himself
Beside the door : But Olaf, who delights
In showing hospitality to all,
Bade him come higher up, and sit by him.
Then did they two begin to hold discourse
Learned and wise. The old man proved him-
self

To be well skill'd in all concerns the land.
Anon he jested, but in such a wise
As was not grateful unto Olaf's mind.
Quoth he : I see ye hold in reverence
The feast of the confusion !—Mindest thou
The evening when the holy brethren
Did take it in their heads to talk, each one
In his peculiar way, and all at once?—
Olaf, dost think they understood each other?—
At length the old man found the hall too warm,
And as this summer-night is fresh and mild
He ask'd the king if he would stray with him
Into the forest—Olaf gave consent.
I follow'd them. The old man led the king
Far up the mountains, then did stop and turn,
And pointed o'er the land, with outstretch'd arm,

The while he spoke. The moon shone clearly
 down ;
 And that old man, wrapt in his long, dark cloak,
 Seem'd like a wizard casting some dire spell
 Over the valley. Heartily I wish
 The king were home! 'tis late ;—then night dews fall.

LANGBRAND.

Long since the sun set glorious in the west,
 To-morrow when it riseth it will smile
 Upon the holy feast of Pentecost.—
 And Olaf was not at the evening mass :
 Never before did he absent himself
 From his high duty.—Let us seek the king !

[*Exeunt.*

OLAF *enters from the other side, slowly walking*
with ANDER, who is wrapt in a dark cloak,
with a cowl covering his head.

ANDER.

Ay, my brave youth, I understand thee well :—
 The vast cathedral, with the long, dim aisles ;
 The softly-streaming rays of mellow'd light,
 Falling in glory on the fairest forms
 Man's faith can image or man's art portray,—
 The solemn harmony, doth lull the mind
 Into a sweet oblivion of this world,—
 Did so enchant thine ear and charm thine eye,
 And through thy senses move and melt thy soul,
 That with the impetuous credulence of youth

Thou didst at once believe that to be true
Which thou so deeply felt'st—and what thou felt'st
Shall all the land of Norway likewise feel,
Or else shall feel thy sword.—Is it not so ?

OLAF.

Thou'rt aged, and grown rigid in thy faith :
I wonder not thou dost disprove my deeds.

ANDER.

Thou sayst I am grown rigid in my faith :
The expression is a good, a happy one.
But tell me, Olaf, what thou deem'st of me,
Couldst thou not, quite as justly, deem of all ?
For faith is merely a propensity,
Peculiar and innate,—a tendency,
The which exalteth the soul's energies
To the Invisible, the Source of Life.
'Tis a propensity that differeth
According to the soil it worketh on,
According to the times it worketh in ;
It differeth e'en as nature differeth.
Thus, Olaf, is it with these stately pines
And yonder lofty mountain : the bold wise
In which they rear their proud tops toward the
sky
Shows, as it were, their faith. And thou canst
deem,
'Tis not for nought that all things we survey,
Far as the eye can reach o'er the free north,—

'Tis not for nought that all doth bear impress
Of one sole spirit, one sole character.—

'Tis otherwise in the luxuriant south :

Instead of dark-green, storm-defying pines
That proudly rear their hardy trunks from earth,
Soft foliag'd trees their shadowing boughs expand,
Wooing each gentle wind, and meekly bent,
Like to thy monks when they perform their mass.

OLAF.

Wondrous old man !

ANDER.

Where heaven is ever blue,
Where, every eve, the sun in radiance sets ;
Where the voluptuous groves do but invite
To loving dalliance and melodious song,—
There wake the minstrel's and the singer's art ;
There do they mingle colours to portray
Each beauteous form, and hue, and flowery scene,—
While love exultant wantoneth o'er all,
Breathing his spirit into everything.—
Where nature, less benignly, bringeth forth
More stones than flowers,—where snow envelopeth
And hideth half the year in its white shroud ;
But where the hardy sinews, ne'er relax'd,
Still acquire vigour ; where a virtue 'tis—
Nature doth teach—hardship and toil to bear
And bravely to endure a frugal lot,—

There no melodious songs enchant the ear,
No beauteous pictures there delight the eye;
But in the long, dark winter-nights, the soul
Doth mutely ope to manhood's high resolves :
There grow the fragrant inward flowers that
twine,

Like roses sweet, round woman's gentle heart ;
Ay, there the vigorous lilies of the thought
Spring from man's vigorous mind. There, gods
are not

Creations of vain fancy, imaged
In quickly-fading, shadow-blended hues :
With the eternal mountains do they rise
Out of the very bosom of the earth,
And calmly, proudly gaze on all below.
There, all the innate powers are led, are urged
By innate wants to exercise themselves :
Thus power doth cope with power; and bravery
And manhood are impressed on the north,
As soft effeminacy on the south.

OLAF.

'Tis wonderful indeed !

ANDER.

Now, if a youth,
Whom chance had carried to that southern clime,
Returned here, and brought a basket full
Of tender flowers of Italy, and wish'd
To plant them in stern Norway's rugged glens,

Where fir and birch trees covered the ground ;
And he began to fell the ancient woods,
Not sparing noblest pine, nor oak of eld,
So that his roses might have room to grow ;——
Olaf, if thou didst see him thus employ'd,
What wouldst thou call him ?

OLAF.

Ha ! depart from me !

ANDER.

A hero ! wouldst thou not ? A champion brave
For the good holy cause.—And the old man
Who said : Rash boy ! fell not mine ancient trees !
Think not thy flowers can thrive amid my hills !—
Say, Olaf, what wouldst thou call him ?

OLAF.

Like thee !

ANDER

[regarding him steadily and fixedly].

And who am I ?

OLAF.

Ander, thou call'st thyself.—

Who art thou ?

ANDER.

Ay ! who am I ? learned youth,
Thou knowest all things : thou must then know
me.

OLAF.

Thou only hast one eye.

ANDER.

Hath the earth more?
The night was clear and lovely with but one;
Soon with the other will the sun shine forth.
Store in thy mind the words that thou hast heard;
Forget not the moon's beam, which healthfully
This summer night hath entered thy soul!

OLAF.

God grant me strength! For now, for the first
time,
Doubt and anxiety have seized my heart.
[While OLAF is turned from ANDER, the latter
goes off with hasty strides and disappears
among the trees.]

LANGBRAND and GRIFFIN enter.

LANGBRAND.

Ah, Olaf! Have I found thee then at last?
We sought thee everywhere. Ah! gracious king,
Why wast thou absent from the evening prayer?
Thou never didst neglect it heretofore—
And now—upon this high and holy eve!

OLAF.

Ha! Langbrand! Say,—where is the old man
gone?

LANGBRAND.

I know not: but forget the old heathenish man,
Who hath bewilder'd thee with cunning words.

OLAF.

Ha, Langbrand! and are vespers then performed?

LANGBRAND.

When the sun set, it was indeed the time ;
That wast thou told, but heeded not my words,
The old man's discourse did so possess thine ears,
E'en as a syren's song.

OLAF.

Who is that man?

GRIFFIN.

To none of all thy warriors is he known ;
To me he seemeth wonderful and strange :
He likeneth Odin in Jarl Hakon's grove.

OLAF.

Ander he call'd himself.

GRIFFIN.

Ander—Odin,—

It comes to the same thing.

LANGBRAND.

Assuredly,

Hath one of Odin's priests been with thee, sire,
And striven with converse figurative and wild,
By Hakon's order, to mislead thy mind :—
Perhaps the Jarl himself.

OLAF.

Be who he may—

He is indeed a spirit of the night,

From ministers of darkness hither sent.
He would fain prove how great a wrong it is
To tear the people from their ancient faith.

LANGBRAND.

And as a proof thereof he did portray
In vivid colours, how the ancient lore
Is grateful to the cold and rugged north?
And he did not forget to tell, I ween,
How from a far-off country of the east,
'Twas by a foreign hero erst brought in?

OLAF.

Ha, Langbrand, thou art right: the ancient
lore

Was also brought in. And what are in truth
His laud and praises of the ancient faith,
Which was begotten by the north itself,
And bears the impress of its character?

LANGBRAND.

Nothing, indeed. For no more in the north
Than in another clime is it allow'd
To offer brother's blood, and to condemn
The blessed virtues of benign, mild peace.

OLAF.

Most true!

LANGBRAND.

I will not utterly condemn
The ancient lore from its first source and rise;
'Tis not in vain God hath permitted it

To widely spread its influence o'er the earth ;
'Tis now a wondrous ruin, nothing more.
Then Christianity had not been taught.
It is the duty of mankind to choose
The better faith.

OLAF.

There true religion spoke !
To-morrow on the feast of Pentecost
I hope to o'erthrow Hakon's heathen power.

LANGBRAND.

His thralls did rob me of the offer-horn,
Which I found in the ground : it else had been
Melted and form'd into an altar-cup.
On it there was engrav'n an ancient verse
Which I liked well.—'Twas this : if for thy fault
Thy fortune faileth, go to the high gods,
Give them the best. And that inscription should
Have been retained on my altar-cup.—
What offering can be more acceptable
Then a pure, grateful heart.—They took the horn ;
But let them keep it ! Punishment for this
As for their other sins shall follow them.

OLAF.

Lo, the sun's beams already gild the east !
Soon shall the blessed orb in glory shine
On Norway's first day of the Pentecost.
No church have we as yet ; but nature's self
Hath hewn for us a chapel in the rock :

There will we sing to heaven a hymn of praise ;
And morning's radiance shall dispel all doubt.

LANGBRAND.

Those words are worthy of thee, noble king !

[*Exit LANGBRAND and OLAF.*

GRIFFIN

[*who has hitherto stood pondering*].

An offer god ? Perhaps, the Jarl himself ?

Ay : it may be so. He was like the Jarl.

But then the Jarl is also like the statue

In the offering grove,—I know not what to
think. [Exit.

THE OFFERING GROVE.

HAKON JARL *enters with his little son* ERLING.

ERLING.

It is so cold, my father !

HAKON.

Dearest child !

'Tis so, because it is so early yet.

Thou tremblest with cold ?

ERLING.

'Tis all the same :

I am so glad ; for thou hast promis'd me

That I shall see the sun arise : and I

Have so long wish'd to see that lovely sight.

HAKON.

Dost see those red beams yonder in the east ?

ERLING.

Ah, father, what a lovely rosy isle !

But tell me, father, whence come all the pearls .

With which the valley is now overstrewn ?

HAKON.

Those are not pearls, but morning dew ; and what

Thou deem'st a rosy island is a cloud

Resplendent in the sun's first rays. Behold !

Lo, how it riseth glorious from the sea !

ERLING.

Oh, what a ball of purple red ! Ah say,

Can we ne'er travel to the morning sun ?

HAKON.

Toward the sun do all things living strive :

For know, my child, that ball of radiancy,

Which smileth on us—that is Odin's eye.

The other, which thou seest at night—the
moon,—

Is coldly gleaming with a pallid light.

Hath Odin placed as pledge, in Mimer's well,

That he may have the water, which imparts

Strength to his sight, rend'ring it sharp and long.

ERLING.

And where is Mimer's well ?

HAKON.

The blessed sea,

Deep rolling there against yon rocky shore,—
That is the deep well of old Mimer, child.
It strengthens Odin's eye. With renew'd power,
And twofold loveliness the sun doth rise,
Sweetly refresh'd by the cool morning waves.

ERLING.

Ah, now it is too high! I cannot bear
To gaze upon it more—it blindeth me.

HAKON.

The all-father entereth into high Hildskialf,
And thence he soon will overlook the world.
This golden throne doth dazzle mortal eyes.—
Who shall presume to gaze upon the king
Of life and day, in noon's effulgency?

ERLING

[looks around with fear].

Ah! father! dearest father, who are they—
Those ugly, old white men, who yonder stand
Behind the trees?

HAKON.

My son, do not speak so!
Those are the statues of the most high gods,
By men carved out of stone. From their looks
shoot
No vivid, dazzling rays, no summer-flames.
Before them Askur's sons may kneel in peace,
And gaze with reverence on their countenance:
Come, Erling, let us nearer look on them.

ERLING.

No, father, no ! I am afraid of them.
The grim old man there, with the great long
beard,
So terribly, so sternly stares on me ;
Indeed he frightens me.

HAKON.

O, Erling ! Erling !
That is God Odin. Doth he frighten thee ?

ERLING.

No, father ! Odin doth not frighten me—
The real Odin, who is in the heavens ;
He would not do me harm, for he is good :
He maketh flowers to spring from the earth's
breast ;
And, even now, his eye did smile on me ;
But yonder grim, wan wizard—he doth scowl,
As though he did desire to kill me.

HAKON.

Ha !

ERLING.

My father, let me seek the wreath of flowers,
Which I left hanging on the wild rose bush,
When we came here to see the sun arise :
And then let us go home—O, father,—pray !
Nor longer near those lowering statues stay ;
For thou canst well believe, that grim, dire man
He meaneth thee no good with his dark scowl.

HAKON.

Go seek thy wreath, child, and straight come
again. [Exit ERLING.

An offer-lamb should gaily, festally
Adorned be. O, holy gods ! behold
Jarl Hakon's mighty faith in this his deed !

ERLING *re-enters, his locks wreathed with
white flowers.*

ERLING

Here am I, dearest father, with my wreath.

HAKON.

Now, ere we go, kneel before Odin, child :
Stretch forth thy clasped hands towards the
heavens,
And say : All-father, hear thy little Erling,
And take him under thy protecting care !

ERLING

[*kneeling with outstretched hands, says, with
childish simplicity,*]

Father of all ! hear little Erling's prayer,
And take him under thy protecting care !

[HAKON, *who stands behind him, raises his dagger
and is about to stab him, when he lets it fall
from his hand. ERLING turns without having
marked the danger takes up the dagger and
says kindly, while he rises,*]

Dear father, thou hast let thy dagger fall.

How bright and sharp it is ! When I am great,
I too shall have a dagger, sword and shield ;
And so will I defend thee 'gainst thy foes.

HAKON.

Ha, what enchanter doth inspire thee,—ay,
With words that thus unman and startle me ?

ERLING.

What aileth thee, my father ? Art thou wroth ?
What have I done ?

HAKON.

Follow me, Erling, straight
Behind the statue !

ERLING.

Ah ! that horrid man !

HAKON.

Obeys, and follow me ! Behind that statue
Do many roses grow,—not white—but red—
Ay, blood-red, purple roses ! Ah, 'tis good
To see how quickly they burst forth in bloom.
Erling, obey, and follow me, I say !

ERLING.

Ah ! Father, I dread those red roses so !

HAKON.

Come ! come ! There croweth shrilly Heimdal's
bird.

It is indeed the hour ! It is the hour !

[They go behind the scene.]

EINAR TAMBESKIALVER *enters in haste, with spear and bow.*

EINAR.

Ha ! Where is he ? They told me he was here,
In the Offering Grove : but there is no Jarl here.
Where is he then ? What would he here ? 'Tis
time

To fight, and not to pray.—Where can he be ?

[*He listens—hears the child's low shriek behind
the scenes.*]

Ye holy gods ! what was that ?—Hakon ! Hakon !

HAKON *enters with blood-stained hands.*

HAKON.

Who calleth me ?

EINAR [*amazed*].

What mean those bloody hands ?

HAKON.

What wouldst thou ?

EINAR.

Hakon ! call thee to the fight.

Olaf hath joined with the bonda chiefs.

And all now march here, 'gainst thy dwelling,
Jarl.

Thy men stand all prepared for the fight ;

But thou wast absent, and couldst not be found.

Hast again offer'd ?

HAKON.

Ay.

EINAR.

What hast thou offer'd?

HAKON.

My offer lieth behind Odin's statue.

EINAR.

'Twill help thee greatly, in good sooth!

[*Goes to see.*]

HAKON.

'Tis done.

Now strength and courage!

EINAR *re-enters, horrified and exasperated.*

EINAR.

Ha, thou curs'd old man!

What hast thou done?

HAKON.

Appeased Odin: offer'd

My own delight, my joy, my own last hope,
For Norway's weal.

EINAR.

To all eternity.,

May Nither torture me in Niffleheim,
If ever more I bend my bow for thee,
Or for thy cause,—although I Berglioth love![*Tears a gold chain from his neck.*]There is thy chain again! And I tear off
With it each link that bound me unto thee!
And now I serve king Olaf Trygvesson.
Thy time is come! this deed hath fill'd my heart

With horror and deep loathing for thy gods :
The god of Olaf shall the conqueror be.
And what doth hinder now my hand, that I
Hew thee not down this instant unto hell?
But no ! more public and more infamous
Shall be thy fall, for I will capture thee,
And hang thee on a gibbet, that thy corse
May be the but of every passer's scorn !

[*Exit.*

HAKON.

And I must hear such words !

[*The lure heard afar off, and voices crying,
Hakon ! Hakon !*]

The hour is come,
That doth decide for Odin or for Christ.
Hark to those tones !—They come from warrior-
maids,
Valkyrier, who fluttering in the air,
With dreadful cries unto the battle call.
How redly swell the veins in Heimdal's brow,
So fiercely doth he blow his galler horn.
Thorgierdur Horgabrud ! I come ! I come !
My Erling have I sacrificed to thee ;
A legion of thy foes shall follow him !

[*Exit.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT THE FIFTH.

HALL AT RIMOLD. NIGHT.

THORA and INGER sit at work by a table, on
which is a light nearly burnt into the socket.

THORA.

IN truth, thou'rt sleepy, Inger.

INGER.

'Tis midnight.

But did not one knock loudly at the door?—

'Tis they!

THORA.

'Twas but the wild storm that doth rage
As though 'twould rend the house. An awful
night!

A winter-darkness! hark, how angrily
The rain and hail incessantly pour down.

INGER.

Dear lady! thou canst not believe nor hope
Thy brothers would ride home in such a storm.
Trust me, they wait until it cleareth up.
Be without fear!

THORA.

If thou art sleepy, Inger,
Thou'd best go to thy bed. I cannot sleep.
I know the fight was early in the morn :
And Skialm and Alf did promise faithfully,
As soon as it were possible, to come.
Go thou to bed!

INGER.

Since thou permittest me,
I'll rest awhile. But one knocks now! 'tis not
The storm this time.

THORA.

Hasten and let them in !
I hear the tread of men who cross the court.

INGER.

'Tis they ! 'tis they ! Be joyful, Thora, now !

THORA.

How anxious is my heart ! My Alf and Skialm
Oppos'd to Hakon ! Ah ! whoe'er hath won,
Thora hath lost.

EINAR TAMBESKIALVER *enters*.

EINAR.

Good morrow, noble Thora :
If I err not, it is indeed the morn.
My name Einar ; hither am I come
To tell thee of the issue of the fight.

No longer fear to find in me a friend
Of Hakon Jarl: for since he in the grove
Offer'd his son in madness to his gods,
That he might conquer, Einar hateth him.

THORA.

Ye gods !

EINAR.

Thou'rt right: the hoary-headed wretch,
Merits the horror such a deed excites.
Thou hast good cause to hate him for the wrong
That he hath done thee. Yesterday at dawn,
I join'd king Olaf. Some acquaintanceship
Had I unto thy brothers, and we soon
Grew intimate; for men in bustling war
Need but an hour to learn what in dull peace
A lifetime scarce can teach. They strove like
men,
And so did all. As lightning from the heavens
Did Olaf split and scatter Hakon's host:
The shields were stain'd with gore, the swords
were hot
With dealing ghastly wounds. Valkyrier
Were hovering o'er the conflict craving blood,
And they receiv'd enough; for ne'er was mead
More plenteously outpour'd in Valaskialf.
Most fell: but Hakon with his slave escap'd,
And now his foes seek for him everywhere.

THORA.

My brothers, Einar ! Where, O where are they ?
Thou com'st at night,—a stranger—Warrior !
I tremble for their fate.—My brothers, Einar !

EINAR.

Be joyful, noble Thora ! Skialm and Alf
Rode with the rising sun unto Valhal;
Long since have they in Odin's presence sat,
And the o'erflowing horn of welcome quaff'd.

THORA.

O Freia !

EINAR.

Joy thee, noble Thora, joy !
'Tis not at every mortal's cradle sung,
So bravely and so gloriously to die.
In the front ever, side by side we fought :
Jarl Hakon raged like a bear at bay.
The conflict was most dire ; two mighty hosts
Striving with all the bitterness of hate.
One half of Norway fought for Hakon Jarl,
The other part for Olaf ; for his name
Flew as a fire in parched summer-grass,
Unto the farthest corner of the land.
Thy brothers still engag'd the Jarl himself ;
They vow'd his death ; they would avenge thy
wrongs :
They fell before the sharp sword of his wrath :
His weapon few have e'er oppos'd and lived.

What is there more? The sword by which they fell
Is worthy of them: for, whate'er men say,
Old Hakon is a warrior, in truth,
Who hath few peers, as in the fight he proved.

THORA.

O Alf! O Skialm! My brothers! O my brothers!

EINAR.

I do not pity—no! I envy them!
They are Einheriar: they glitter now
In shining helms: already are their loins
Girded with bright glaves, by Vaulundar forged.
To-morrow in a mound are they interr'd,
Defying time; and on that honor'd mound
King Olaf will erect high Banta-stones.
Greet Thora! Greet our sister! cried they:—
These were the last words that they uttered;
I promis'd it, and have fulfill'd my word.
I now ride with a troop of Olaf's men
To seek the Jarl; the king is with another;
We meet at Ganlaae: he has summoned
The Thing to assemble; but I know not where:
Now have I gone somewhat out of my way,
For thy dead brothers' sake.—I wot it rains,
My helm's plume drips with wet.—Soon, soon,
we hope
To capture Hakon, and avenge thy wrongs.
May Frigga bless thee, Thora! Fare thee well!

[Exit.]

THORA.

Ye holy gods! unto what fearful fate
Is wretched Thora destined? Oh! how,
How hath this breaking heart offended ye?
[*A man enters, wrapt in a cloak, his face concealed.*]
Ha! Who is that? Stranger, what wilt thou here?

THE UNKNOWN.

Are we alone? Alone, in safety here?

THORA.

How doth he talk of safety, who intrudes
Into my house and doth alarm me thus?
Tell me, what wilt thou?

THE UNKNOWN

[*throwing his cloak aside*].

Dost thou know me, Thora?

THORA.

Hakon! Almighty gods!

HAKON.

Ay, even he!

THORA.

Thou fleest to me?

HAKON.

By all Valhalla's gods!

Thou hast good cause for this astonishment:
But where's the noble game that will not seek
For covert, e'en the most ungrateful spot,
When the pursuing death-hounds press too near?

THORA.

Hakon, thou'rt pale and wan—thy glance is faint.

HAKON.

Great Odin be my witness, I have fought
As fights a wolf when it defends its young;
With this glave have I to Valhalla sent
A throng of warriors.—Now, I'm tired and worn;
My army is destroy'd, my fortune flown:
Olaf hath blunted with his Christian spells
The sword of Norway.—Crowds deserted me;
And now I have not one in whom to trust.
Rota hath laid her heavy, ice-cold hand
Upon my brow; the night through with my slave
I've ridden, worn and wearied with the fight:
A burning thirst hath long tormented me;
Say, Thora, is it water in this cup?

THORA.

Ah, Hakon, stay, and I will bring thee straight.

HAKON [*drinks*].

Nay! It is well.—Ha! that hath quenched all.
At Ganlaae my poor steed exhausted fell:
I plunged my sword into his heart and dipp'd
My mantle in the blood, and left it there,
So to delude the foe.

THORA.

Ah, Hakon! Hakon!

HAKON.

Now, Thora, as I went thy dwelling by,

I call'd to mind, how oft, how fervently,
Thou sworedest none could love me as thou didst.
Full well I know, love can be changed to hate.—
Well, it shall soon be proved if thine be so.—
Here am I, Thora ! Wilt thou shelter me,
Now in my need from persecuting foes ?
If thou wilt so—then thanked be thy love,
Which I have known so little how to prize.
If thou refusest,—Thora, it doth cost—
Thora ! it doth cost Hakon Jarl to beg !——
He'll wander out again in the wild storm,
And climbing to the highest mountain top,
Will look once more on his beloved land,
Will gaze for the last time upon the realm,
Which homage unto him hath paid, and then
Fall calmly on his sword, and calmly die.
Then will the wild storm bear upon its wings
The soul of Hakon to the god of hosts :
And on the pinnacle of frowning crag,
The sun shall find the dauntless warrior's corse,
And say : In death e'en as in life, sublime.

THORA.

Oh, Hakon ! Hakon ! speak not thus !—No, no :
I hate thee not,—I cannot hate thee now.
Oh, I will guard thee, Hakon !—shelter thee,
And with my life protect thee from thy foes.
[She clasps his hand in both of hers.]

HAKON.

Knowest thou that I have murder'd with this
hand

The little Erling, whom thou lovedst so well ?

THORA.

Yes, thou hast offer'd him unto the gods :
That proveth but the dire extremity
To which a fell, disastrous destiny
Brought thy unbending spirit.

HAKON.

Knowest thou,
That with this hand, so kindly clasp'd in thine,
I have—ah ! it doth pain me that——

THORA.

I know,—
That thou hast slain my brothers in the fight.

HAKON.

And yet ?

THORA.

Is Thora still the same. Yes, Hakon, yes ;
Thou hast dealt hardly, cruelly with me :
Repaid my love with scorn, and sear'd my heart !
My brothers slain ;—but in the battle field
Is life oppos'd to life : and Einar said
They are now in Valhal, in blessedness.

*[Hides her face in her hands and weeps—then
gazes on the JARL].*

Ha, tell me, Hakon ! is it thou dost stand
In Thora's dwelling 'midst the forest murk,
Far from the brilliant kingly hall of Klada,
In this dark fearful night, while 'gainst the walls
The wild storm rageth, as within my breast ?
Say, Hakon, is the mute and pallid form,
Here standing, without helm and purple robe,
Supported on a sword—can it be thou ?

HAKON.

That wan form once was Norway's mighty lord :
His glance the bravest of the north obey'd.
He fell in battle—in a fight at Klada.
Ah, it is long, long since, soon, soon forgot ;
Now, his shade only wandereth about,
Haunting the night ;—Jarl Hakon was he named.

THORA.

I am reveng'd,—Ah, cruelly reveng'd !
Away, foul hatred ! Reawaken, love !—
I were no woman, but a forest wolf,
If from my heart all hatred did not flee
At such a sight.—O, rest upon my breast !
I'll wipe those drops of anguish from thy brow,
And call up life into thy faded eye.

[*Embraces him.*]

HAKON [*wildly*].

Thy name, my lovely daughter of the north ?

THORA.

By maidens of the valley I am call'd

Forget-me-not. A gentle, kindly flower,
I grew up at a noble oak tree's root,
Thence all my life, deriving all my joy ;
But I did droop and wither, when no more
I was allow'd to thrive where first I sprang,
In the protecting shade of that loved tree.

HAKON.

Forget-me-not ! A lovely name indeed !

THORA.

Oh, Freia ! How is it thou tremblest so ?
A fever shaketh thee in Thora's arms.
Thou weepest, Hakon ! Everlasting gods !
Ere now, when saw I tears upon thy cheek ?

HAKON [*with wild kindness*].

Forget-me-not ! thou lovely little flower
Of warrior's grave, dost wonder at my tears ?
Say : hast thou never seen the hard stones weep,
When brought from freezing cold to kindly
warmth ?

'Tis but death's sweat, thou wan funereal flower !
Let not that frighten thee.

THORA.

Merciful Freia !

HAKON.

The mountain snow doth melt,—that soon is o'er :
The stern, hard winter doth dissolve in tears,
And giveth place to the luxuriant spring,—
To Olaf's flowers. Jarl Hakon is no more :

The wan shade still remaineth: but approach,
Approach ye, without fear, and boldly thrust
A javelin through this form, deep in the earth!—
He'll haunt ye then no more; he'll be at peace.

THORA.

Speak not thus wildly, Hakon! Be thyself!
The greatest soul, however high and strong,
Must bend at last to Nature. All too long,
Thy heart in enmity and wrath was strung,
In dark confusion is it loosen'd now.
Come, follow me! There is beneath the house
An ancient vault, hewn in the solid rock,
Known unto none, save me. In safety there
I'll hide thee till the danger has past o'er.
A happier fortune soon on thee will smile.

HAKON.

Ha, tell me: dost believe that day doth smile
Upon the farther outlet of that vault?

THORA.

Ay, my dear Hakon! doubtlessly it doth.

HAKON.

Ah! Valhal fadeth before Olaf's dreams.—
And in the secrecy of that dark vault,
Deep, deep below the ground where stand my
foes,
The danger's past,—into that dungeon murk,
But refuge sure wilt thou bring me?

THORA.

I will.

HAKON

[extends solemnly his hand to her].

Come, my Valkyria! my beauteous Hal!

I follow thee.

THORA.

O, pity him, mild gods!

HAKON.

Dost thou believe I tremble at thy sight?
Thou'rt wan and ghastly, and thy lips are blue:
Thou slay'st not quickly, as thy sisters slay,
As Hildur and the wild Seierskogul,
With instant death dealt by a warrior's hand;
But torturing with protracted anguish, first
Destroy'st man's courage, afterwards his life.
But, notwithstanding, let us hasten hence!
Thou hast not quenched yet my spirit's pride;—
I follow thee with firm step to my grave.

THORA.

O, all the gods of mercy, aid him now!

[Exeunt.]

OUTSKIRTS OF THE FOREST AT GANLAAE.

OLAF TRYGVESON, CARLSHOVED, JOSTEIN,
GRIFFIN. *A number of Warriors.*

GRIFFIN.

Day dawns, king Olaf! Heaven begins to smile,
And promises, in truth, a day as fair
As the past night was foul. Art thou not tired?
Wilt thou not rest beneath the tree, the while
The horses get their forage?

OLAF.

No; no rest!

I cannot rest,—I've vow'd that I will not,—
I cannot rest before Jarl Hakon's found.
The dire, atrocious murder of his son
Shall be rewarded, shall cost him his life.

JOSTEIN.

That was a horrible, a fearful deed.

OLAF.

His army's scatter'd, but is not destroy'd:
Young Einar gaily talks of victory;
But he is yet less wise than he is brave.
If Hakon escapes again and gaineth time,
The streams divided now will soon unite
Into one cataract. I am not come
In order to lay waste the land with war;
I wish to comfort it with heavenly peace.

Hakon shall expiate his dreadful crime
With his own blood; no hope of peace is there,
The while he liveth; while that heathen breathes
The Christian rose will feel his blighting breath.

EINAR TAMBESKIALVER *enters with HAKON's
bloody garment.*

EINAR.

We need not now go farther. By yon stream
We found the Jarl's horse slain, and at its side
His cloak lay, soak'd with blood. Undoubtedly,
One of thy warriors met him: he is dead.

OLAF.

Ha! can thy news be true? Tell me, my friends,
Is this Jarl Hakon's robe?

GRIFFIN.

His robe it is;
But where is Hakon? Did his body lie
Beside the stream?

EINAR.

No: we but found his robe,
And his dead steed, both cover'd o'er with blood!

GRIFFIN.

Bring Hakon's self! then will we rest content,
But not before. Know'st thou not Hakon
better?

Deem I aright, ere this the Jarl has found
Another robe. Pay no attention, sirs,
To this decoy, this stratagem. 'Tis like

The cunning Jarl: he hath but play'd this trick
To make ye think him dead:—I know him well.

OLAF.

The day advanceth, and we but lose time.
On! on! we are not far from Rimold now:
There have I summoned the Thing, and there
Shall hear if there be tidings of the Jarl.

GRIFFIN.

There dwelleth Thora, his true love.

EINAR.

Who was!

But Hakon deeply hath offended her,
Her brothers also were his deadliest foes.

GRIFFIN.

A search can harm not:—true love never dies.

OLAF.

It dawneth more and more.—To horse! to horse!
[*Exeunt.*

~~~~~

A VAULTED CAVERN UNDER GROUND.

HAKON and KARKER enter; the latter with a  
*lamp and food.*

KARKER.

This then's the hole in which we must lie hid?  
The accommodation is not of the best.  
Where shall I set the lamp?



HAKON.

In yonder niche.

KARKER.

In truth, so can I. And here have we seats  
Hewn in the rock. One can then rest him-  
self.

Lord Jarl, will ye not choose to eat a bit?  
Ye have had nothing all the day and night.

HAKON.

No! no! I am not hungry! Thou canst eat!

KARKER.

That will I, yearningly, by your leave, Jarl.

*[Seats himself and eats; the JARL walks to  
and fro with long strides.]*

Lord Jarl! This is indeed an ugly hole.  
Mark'd ye the coffin, the black case that stood  
Beside the door through which we enter'd here?

HAKON.

Be silent, slave, and eat! *[To himself]* In this  
dark vault

Hath Thora wandered many a sleepless night,  
And wept in loneliness. For her own grave  
This cavern is design'd. In secrecy  
Her coffin is prepar'd for her: and here  
That beauteous woman's lovely form shall soon  
Be laid out, foul corruption to await.

*[Regards KARKER.]*

Why dost thou not eat, thrall? What ails thee now?

Thou 'rt greedily enough disposed else.

KARKER.

Ah! my lord Jarl, I have no appetite.

HAKON.

Eat, thrall! enjoy thyself. Be glad and gay!  
Fear nothing; place thy trust in me, thy lord.

KARKER.

Ah, my lord Jarl! ye are yourself cast down,  
And anxious and afflicted in your heart.

HAKON.

Afflicted in my heart? Thrall! dost thou dare?  
Be merry! if thou canst not eat, then sing!  
Sing me a lay, a ballad—what thou wilt.  
Yet I would rather listen to a song  
That, unconstrained and boisterous, rageth forth  
Like rain and hail in a wild winter storm.—  
Thrall! sing a cradle-song—a cradle-song!

KARKER.

A cradle song!

HAKON.

Such as can lull  
The old child, at night, to slumber without fear.

KARKER.

I know an excellent war-ballad, Jarl.

HAKON.

Hath it a fearful ending? Doth it seem

At first as though all were most prosperous,  
But yet doth end with infamy and death ?

KARKER.

No, my lord ! from the first 'tis sorrowful.

HAKON,

That can I like. The wile, that all things should  
So peacefully and happily begin,  
That the catastrophe may move us more,  
Is trite e'en unto loathsomeness. But doth  
The morn lower darkly, we know what to attend.  
Begin thy song !

KARKER [*sings*].

“King Harald and Erling they sailed one night,  
With moonshine clear and wind so light :  
But when unto Oglogaard they came  
The Jarl they burn'd in his house's flame.”

HAKON.

Karker, art mad ? Dost dare to sing to me  
My father's murder ?

KARKER.

Ah ! was Sigurd Jarl  
Your father, sir ? I ne'er knew that before.  
With him it ended foolishly enough.

HAKON.

Peace, slave !

KARKER.

Not e'en a truss of straw is here,  
On which a man may lay him down to sleep.

HAKON.

If thou art weary, lay thee on the ground !  
That have I many a time been glad to do.

KARKER.

That will I, yearningly, by your leave, Jarl.

[KARKER *lies down on the ground and goes to sleep* ; HAKON *gazes on him.*]

HAKON.

Low, sluggish nature ! Dost already sleep ?  
Doth the small spark, which witness'd that thou  
wert

An animal, and not a lifeless block,  
Now smoulder, buried 'neath the ashes' heap ?  
Here doth it crackle, glow, and fume no more !—  
Was it a sign, a warning from the fates,  
When thou didst sing the murder of my sire ?  
Doth Hakon's death approach in a like guise  
To Sigurd's ? Sigurd was a man of blood ;  
He worshipp'd rigidly the ancient gods ;  
Beneath the garb of friendship he betray'd  
The gentle Athelstein :—he was as I.—  
Odin ! hath Christ then vanquish'd thee,  
indeed ?

Is the proud barrier to the southern faith  
Razed to the dust ?—Ha, it is cold ! 'tis cold  
In this fell cavern ! It is damp and chill.—

[*He walks to and fro awhile, then stands still  
and gazes on KARKER.*]

He dreameth ! Frightful wrinkles form themselves  
Upon his slave-like brow. There lieth he,  
And grinneth 'neath the lamp like some foul elf.

[*Stirs him.*]

Awaken, thrall ! Arouse thee, Karker ! Say,  
What meaneth thy grim smile ?

KARKER.

Ah ! ha ! I dream'd.

HAKON.

What didst thou dream ?

KARKER.

I dream'd——

HAKON.

Hush, slave ! be still !—

What is that noise above us ?

KARKER.

Hear you not  
The clang of weapons and of steel-clad limbs ?  
It is a troop of warriors, my lord Jarl !  
Ah ! they are Olaf's men who seek for you.

HAKON.

This old vault is unknown, and Thora gave  
The key to me : with heavy iron bars  
The door is fasten'd. Here we are secure.

KARKER [*listens*].

Hark what one of them crieth with loud voice !

HAKON.

What is't he saith ?

KARKER.

He crieth, Olaf will  
Richly reward with silver and with gold  
Him who doth bring the head of Hakon Jarl.

HAKON

*[gazing steadfastly on him].*

And wilt thou not seek to obtain that prize?—  
Why tremblest thou? Why art thou pale and  
wan?

KARKER.

Ah! I yet tremble, thinking of my dream.

HAKON.

What didst thou dream?

KARKER,

The first of all was thus:  
We sailed in a boat upon the sea,  
I held the helm.

HAKON.

Well! that betokeneth  
Thou strivest for my life and weal. Be true!  
Be faithful to me in my hour of need,  
And I will give thee more than Olaf can.

KARKER.

I dreamed more.

HAKON.

What was it, Karker? Say!

KARKER.

I dream'd a stalwart, sombre man did come

Down from the mountains, and did tell me  
how  
The sounds and channels were all closed.

HAKON.

Slave! Slave!

Thou dream'st not well; for that betokeneth  
A short, brief life for us. Be true! Be true!  
Remember well,—as thou thyself hast told,—  
On the same night we both were born: Be sure  
Between our deaths there will not be long space

KARKER.

Again, it seem'd, I stood in Klada's hall,  
And Olaf set a collar of pure gold  
About my neck.

HAKON.

Ha! that betokeneth,  
Olaf will set a collar of twined hemp  
Around thy neck, if thou betray'st thy lord.  
Go, slave! and set thee down on yon stone seat  
I will sit here on this: so will we sleep.

KARKER.

E'en as you please, lord Jarl.

HAKON.

Where wilt thou now

KARKER.

I would but trim the lamp.

HAKON.

Go, sit thee down!

Touch not the lamp! Thou couldst chance put  
it out;

So should we sit in hopeless darkness here.—

I cannot ween how in the silent hours

Of lifeless darkness, ere he lays him down

To sleep, man calmly can put out the light.

It is a ghastly imaging of death,

More dread and horrible than death itself.—

Touch not the lamp! It burneth drowsily;

But still it burneth.—While there's light there's  
hope.

*[Awhile sit they in silence.]*

How, Karker! Sleepest thou?

KARKER.

Ay, soundly, Jarl!

HAKON.

Ha! stupid, senseless slave!

*[Rises and paces to and fro.]*

Ah! Hakon, Hakon!

Is then that animal all that is left,

The only living remnant of thy power?

I trust him not. What can he feel or know

Of duty or fidelity? Nay, nay!

Like a base dog, he'll fawning come to him

Who off'reth the best morsel.

*[Aloud]* Karker! here!

Give me thy dagger! 'Tis not for a thrall

To wear a weapon.



KARKER.

My good lord, 'twas you,  
E'en you did give it me. But here it is!

[*Delivers his dagger to HAKON.*]

HAKON.

Now sleep!

KARKER.

Ay, straight.

[*Again lies down.*]

HAKON.

A fever shaketh me,  
My brow is burning: I am wearied, faint  
With the day's conflict and the night's long  
flight:

And yet I dare not sleep; for that vile thrall——  
Still will I rest awhile; but will not sleep.

[*Seats himself and falls asleep.*]

KARKER [*rising stealthily*].

He sleeps at last. Ah! Jarl, you trust not me!  
King Olaf offers gold, gold for his head.—  
He fears I will betray him:—and what more  
Can I now hope to gain by him?—He moves,  
So help me Thor! He walketh in his sleep.

HAKON

[*Arises in his sleep and comes forward with firm  
slow steps to the middle of the cavern, where he  
stands.*]

Gulldharald! Graafeld! What will ye with me?

Leave me in peace ! Ye merited your deaths :—  
I did not with false friendship ye beguile.—  
Now, what wouldst thou, fair girl ! Go home,  
go home !

I have no longer time for foolery.  
And thy betroth'd.—And Odin's statue fall'n—  
It fell in ruin—All Valhalla's gods,  
Like mists, have vanished before the Christ.  
Olaf, thou didst stoop to the lure—and I  
In death's fell talons writhe.—Who weepeth  
there ?

Ah ! this is worst ! My Erling, is it thou ?  
Stabb'd I too deeply ?—From thy guileless breast  
On the red roses red drops trickle down.—

[*Cries out.*]

Ha ! Karker ! Karker !

KARKER.

Here, my lord Jarl, here.—  
He still walks in his sleep.

HAKON.

It is fulfill'd !  
Slave ! take thy dagger ! thrust it in my heart !

KARKER.

It will repent you when you waken, Jarl !

HAKON.

I have deserv'd it, Karker ! Strike me here !

KARKER [*takes the dagger*].

He is my lord, and I must needs obey.

HAKON.

Ha! haste thee! haste thee, thrall! ere I awake:  
Or thou or I must die.

KARKER.

Why then, die thou!

*[Plunges the dagger into HAKON'S breast.*HAKON *[falls]*.

There heavenly vengeance struck me with its  
flames.—

Now, Olaf, is thy prophecy fulfill'd.

*[Dies.*

KARKER.

Now, it is done—no wailing can avail:

E'en though I cried and groaned e'er so much,

My sorrowing could not bring back life to him.

So, I'll e'en take the key from him and bear

His body to the door we enter'd by.

Then hie to Olaf, and reveal it all:

So will he give me silver and red gold.—

What's happen'd's happen'd. — He desir'd his  
death:

I have but done what he commanded me.

*[He lifts the corse on his shoulders and bears it out.*

AN OPEN PLACE BEFORE THORA'S DWELLING.

OLAF TRYGVESON *stands on a high stone, armed with shield and spear, and surrounded by men assembled at the Thing.*

GRIFFIN.

Now is the Thing complete : see, hither come  
The Bondas, headed by the brave old Bergthor,  
The eldest of them all. He yesterday,  
In spite his heavy load of years, did strive  
For thee, king Olaf. But he saw thee not ;  
For it was night, or ere the fight was done.  
He is a man!—But thou shouldst see his daughters,  
Born of his third wife, when he was himself  
Over threescore.

BERGTHOR *enters, followed by a crowd of Bondas.*

BERGTHOR.

There standeth he, my friends ! There standeth he,  
Nobly and proudly, as becomes a king :  
So stood Haarfager—so stood Athelstein !

[*Takes off his cap.*]

Art thou the son of Trygyve, Vigen's king ?

OLAF.

Yes, I am Olaf, royal Trygyve's son.

## BERGTHOR.

A noble mien ! one can straight know the race.  
Now, Olaf, thou hast summon'd us to Thing ;  
Langman am I for Trondelagen's Bondas ;  
For I am eldest. Welcome to the land !  
Though we fought with thee yesterday, to-day  
For the first time we see thee : but believe  
That every Norskman has long wish'd thee here.  
With joy do we accept thee for our king.  
Here is a crown which Hakon bade me make ;  
But I did form it round an iron ring,  
Which was the measure of dark Halfdan's brow :  
It was ill fitted for Jarl Hakon's head.

[*OLAF sets the crown on.*]

It fitteth, as 'twere cast upon his brow !  
Strike on your shields, friends ! Hail him as your  
king !

[*Clang of weapons.*]

## THE PEOPLE.

Hail, Olaf, son of Trygyve ! hail our king !  
Fidelity and fealty unto thee,  
We vow ! To stand by thee, in weal, in woe,  
We swear by Odin, and by all the gods !

## OLAF.

One god, brave men of Norway, is enough !  
Swear by the only true and living god,  
Who heareth, seeth, knoweth everything !

## THE PEOPLE.

By Olaf's god, by Olaf's god ! we swear !

[*Clang of weapons—a shout of joy. Behind the scene a noise heard.*]

EINAR enters.

EINAR.

Thy sun, king Olaf, hath dispell'd the mists :  
The thunder-clouds have vanish'd from the sky.  
They bring the corse of Hakon on a shield :  
His old love, Thora, could not all forget  
Former affection ; but concealed him  
In an unknown, deep subterraneous vault,  
Where Karker, his own slave, hath murder'd him.

OLAF.

Hast thou seen Hakon's body ? Art thou sure  
'Tis truly he ?

EINAR.

Ay : now 'tis he, indeed,  
And not his mantle merely. Wan and dead  
He lieth, blood still trickling from his breast.

OLAF.

Peace to his soul in death ! See that his corse  
Be borne unto the vault where it was found :—  
His death appeaseth me.—My hate is quench'd.  
Unhappy Thora ! faithful to the last.—  
O, woman's love, how wonderful art thou !—  
Go, let her have the cherish'd dust again.  
The vile and treacherous slave deserveth death.

GRIFFIN.

Tis well, my king !

OLAF [*steps down*].

Let us to Klada now !

Who followeth me ?

BERGTHOR.

All Norway, noble king !

OLAF.

Well ! ye shall all be my most welcome guests.

The moon gives promise of a happy eve.

The golden horns shall go around the board

In Trondhiem's joyous grove ; and ye shall quaff

To Olaf's welcome.

THE PEOPLE.

Hail our noble king !

[*Exit OLAF, followed by all.*]

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THE SUBTERRANEAN VAULT.

*The lamp still burns, two menials enter with a bier, which they set in the midst of the cave and retire. THORA comes slowly in with a drawn sword and a wreath of pine in her hand, she stands long gazing on the bier, then says :*

And thus thou art enshrined, Hakon Jarl,  
In Thora's shrine ! How little did I deem  
When first I saw thee in thy proud estate,

That thou, ere long, shouldst lie on Thora's bier !  
Peace, peace be with thee, wearied, in the tomb !  
If thou hast sinned, thou hast died for it :  
And base were he, whose wanton cruel tongue  
With venom'd words would seek to taint thy fame !  
In death I love thee, Hakon, as in life.  
As the sun, shone thy glory in the north,  
Imparting light and radiancy to all ;  
A little while—and all the warrior throng,  
Who in the noontide beams of thy renown  
So proudly bask'd, have all forgotten thee,  
And bow in homage to a foreign light ;  
And now, a woman's heart alone doth throb  
In deep, still sorrow by thy pallid corse :  
Then let her hand the honours render thee  
That thy ungrateful men neglect to pay,  
In the intoxication of their joy.

*[She lays the wreath and sword on the bier.]*

From Thora's hand receive this e'ergreen wreath !  
A wreath of Norway's proud pine twined around  
Thy noble warrior glave ; betokening  
Thou wert a northern hero and a brave.—  
When all the colouring, each redeeming hue,  
Hath been effaced by the hand of time,  
And but the outline harsh of deeds remains,  
The Saga of the north will coldly tell :  
He was a cruel, stern idolater !  
Then men with shuddering will name thy name :—



I shudder not, for I did know thee well :  
The highest energies, the noblest soul,  
Were offer'd to the errors of thy day.  
Then rest in peace, thou mighty Hakon Jarl !  
Good night ! good night ! On high the god of  
hosts  
Glad'neth thy warrior soul.—I now go hence ;  
And when again the door of this dark vault  
Doth open—they will bear in Thora's corse,  
And lay it peacefully by Hakon's side.

END OF THE TRAGEDY.

## POEMS.

1

2

# POEMS.

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## THE LAY OF AGNES.

WHEN the snow's lilies only deck the field,  
Thou snow-white lily, I remember thee !  
When wandering winds the slender branches  
wield,  
Thou graceful-moving, I remember thee !

When summer banks the restless blue streamslave,  
Thou ever-flitting, I remember thee !  
When o'er the deep, light rolls the passing wave,  
Thou lightly transient, I remember thee !

When mist's dark veil the mountain's proud brow  
hides,  
Thou veil'd in mystery, I remember thee !  
When the far meteor o'er the heaven glides,  
Thou far-enchanting, I remember thee !

When morning's red beam o'er the ocean hovers,  
Thou love-irradiant, I remember thee !  
When the cloud-struggling moon its light discovers,  
Thou wondrous light, I then remember thee !

When through the valley moves the breath of  
spring,  
Waker of longing, I remember thee !  
When o'er the hills night flieth with murk wing,  
Thou dream-inspirer, I remember thee !



## LITTLE GUNVER.

LITTLE Gunver loveth to wander at even  
By the wondrous sea :  
Her heart is as wax, as a star of heaven  
Her soul's purity.  
O, guard thee, my child, from deceitful man !

Little Gunver angleth with silken line  
On the beach so lone ;  
While gentle night winds and waves combine  
In soothing tone.  
O, guard thee, my child, from deceitful man !

A Merman arose from the deep, yclad

In herbs of the sea :

His eyes beam'd with love, his voice rich, yet sad,  
Like a harp's melody.

“ Little Gunver, why torture me, day and night,  
With the pangs of love?

A consuming flame my spirit doth blight.—  
Can nothing thee move ?

“ O ! wouldst thou but stretch forth thy snow-  
white arm

To my burning breast,

Peace were mine.—Think not I would do thee harm  
E'en to be blest !

“ Little Gunver, within this bosom so rude

'I here throbbeth a heart,

As kindly as thou art lovely and good,  
As void of all art.”

“ Think'st thou if this arm can make thee so blest,  
That I were loath

To grant it to thee? O, let thy heart rest !  
Take, take them both !”

Delighted he beareth her into the deep

To his coral bed :

Loud and wild is his laugh : but the fishes weep  
Over Gunver dead.

O, guard thee, my child, from deceitful man !

“DU ALDRIG VIL ELSKE?”

THOU never wilt love ? 'Twas to Fylla I spoke,  
One morning in spring as beside her I knelt,  
While the sun brightly rose o'er the east, and awoke  
Song, odour, and hue, as his blest beams were  
felt.

“No,” answer'd she, “never ! for love is a shade,  
As transient as dew in yon orb's glowing beam :  
As the purple of morning, how soon doth it fade !  
Then, weeping, we wake from its heavenly  
dream.”



VAHL.

DECK, deck the grave, ye tender flowers !  
Your friend, your lover, he is dead !  
Die not with him ! Although hot showers  
Of bitter tears o'er ye be shed,  
In freshness and in fragrance rise !  
And thou, tall pine, shake from the skies

The heavy tears of silent grief!  
White rose, entwine thee with the red,  
And wind in wreaths above his head :  
O, willow, bow thee down and weep from every  
leaf!

Ye humble violets who lie  
'Neath the fresh grass, the spring's kind air  
Perfuming ; to the Deity  
Still gazing, while ye shun the glare  
Of bright renown,—around his bed  
Assemble ye, as lamps that gleam  
Where rest in peace the silent dead,  
With a pale, death-like blue, but yet most holy  
beam !

Your lover had no wealth, no gold ;  
No ornament adorn'd his bier :  
Ye golden flowers, your leaves unfold ;  
Thou silvery lily, spring up here ;  
Entwine his name ! he was a flower,  
As thou, pure, lovely, loving, mild :  
How glorious was his spirit's power :  
His mind, free from all stain, unsullied, undefil'd !

Flora ! thy cherish'd eastern home,  
Where flowers in richest fragrance bloom,  
Awhile forsake, and come, O, come  
To thy fond adorer's tomb !



Come where tranquilly doth sleep  
Thy fond votary : strew his bed  
With rarest wild flowers ! smile and weep ;  
And bless, O bless with peace the slumbers  
of the dead !

'Twas his ambition to be dear,  
Flora, to thee. God who hath clad  
The lilies of the field, ere here  
He wandered, clothed him. Calm, not sad,  
His too short life : his friends were few,  
Though Europe hath his worth confest :  
To thee, sweet goddess, ever true—  
Flora ! thy lover, clasp unto thy fragrant breast !

Not unto man, but unto ye,  
Ye tender flowers, the bard doth turn  
For gratitude. Oh ! piously  
Adorn your dear friend's hallowed urn !  
The yew tree and the dark-green pine  
Alone, in winter, shade thy tomb ;  
But every spring, O Vahl ! combine  
Ten thousand smiling flowers to dissipate its  
gloom !

## HIEMVEE.\*

O, THOU wondrous evening sky !  
Whither dost thou lead my soul ?  
Sweet odours that refreshing fly,  
Tell me whither now ye roll ?  
Flee ye o'er the glistening strand  
To my loved fatherland ?  
Will ye with sweet breath reveal  
All my torn heart must conceal ?  
Ah ! wearied sun ! behind those hills  
Thou sinkest now with lurid light,  
And leavest me to mine own ills,  
And the deep solitude of night.  
No mountain rears its head austere  
At home : am I then better here ?—  
Where are the smiling solitudes  
Of my dear Hertha's whispering woods ?  
Norway's son, I call to mind,  
Thou hast sung with melting breast,  
Nowhere save at home we find  
Peaceful joy and tranquil rest :—  
Swiss, who from the mountains came,  
Of thy land hast thou said the same.  
Holy the feeling is that which fills  
Both hearts with love for your dear hills.

\* "Hiemvee"—That longing for home which maketh the heart sick.

But think not then that mountains only  
Impress themselves upon the heart,  
My darken'd mind feels here more lonely ;  
To me these rocks no joys impart.  
Pines, whose dark boughs sighing move !  
Where is my home's beech-tree grove ?—  
The winding flood that here doth roll  
Cannot lull nor sooth my soul.

At home there flows no rolling river,  
Confined in a channel steep :  
The fount of life, of joy the giver,  
Extends itself, the silvery deep  
Encircleth in her kindly arms  
Her daughter's full, luxuriant charms,  
And amid flowers, delighted rests  
On Siölunda's\* fragrant breasts.

Peace, O peace ! Lo, a boat swingeth  
To yon bank in the moonlight ;  
To her guitar a maiden singeth,  
In this stilly summer-night.—  
Pure, suave tones ! Enchanting art !  
How thou streamest through my heart !  
Why mourn I over earthly things,  
While that maid so sweetly sings ?

\* Siölunda, the grove or bower of the sea, the ancient Skaldic name for Denmark.

It is not my native tongue !

These are not the words I know,  
Which in my own dear land are sung,  
Where by the cottage green trees grow.  
Better, sweeter, though they be,  
They are not so dear to me.  
Better the strings her hand may sweep,  
Yet, O, forgive me that I weep !

Do not, do not think my song

But a discontented moan !  
The river flowing now doth long  
For something with that plaintive tone.  
How my lonely heart would love  
A night like this in my dear grove !  
Ah ! thoughts, why will ye backward turn,  
Causing my too fond heart to mourn ?

Early did I lose my mother :

Ah ! what misery for me !  
Denmark is indeed another ;—  
Shall I no more that mother see ?  
Life passeth as a winter's day,  
And the fates lead me far away :  
When cometh the dark hour of death,  
Shall she receive my parting breath ?

## WIEDEWELT.

WIEDEWELT was a sculptor famous, but neglected, talented, but indigent. The statue of liberty, erected at Copenhagen, to commemorate the emancipation of the Danish peasantry, in 1788, is supported by four emblematical figures in white marble; two of which are sculptured by Wiedewelt. In 1802, at the age of seventy, unable longer to endure the slow torture of want, unable even to await the flight of a few hours more of mortal misery, he threw himself into the sea, and found with death, we trust, the peace he sought.—TRANS.

GLEAMETH the beam of night:  
Myriads of stars invite:  
Lifeless and lonesome the dark strand appears:  
Sadly the cold night dew  
Into the water blue  
Drops from the bows of the willow, like tears.

Gently the dark sea laves,  
With pearl-clear glistening waves,  
The beach; softly, mildly the night breezes blow:  
While the pale orb of night  
Sheddeth a trembling light  
On the deep-furrow'd brow of a wan son of woe.

Thou of the silvery hair !  
Heavy those tears of care  
Fall on the hard ground, unfeeling and cold.  
Tottering with step so weak,  
Canst thou but succour seek  
On thy staff?—How art thou friendless and old !

Misery urgeth on ;  
All hope in life is gone :—  
The hand of death quencheth despair's glances  
wild.—  
Lo ! where he, weak, expands  
His meager, trembling hands  
Unto yon heaven, calm, peaceful, and mild.

“No vain lament I raise :  
Numbered are my days.—  
My spirit refuseth to dwell longer here.  
Holy is the desire,  
Doth my tired soul inspire  
To flee to yon silvery cloud-veiled sphere.

“Long and deeply I sought :  
Great, kind nature taught ;  
Her charms, her loveliness unveil'd to me.  
Inspired I wrought,  
Till I realized thought,  
In many sculptur'd forms of harmony.

“Ye hard, cold stones !  
My fragile bones  
Shall crumble soon deep in the ocean’s bed :  
But ye shall proclaim  
My thoughts and my fame,  
Long after I am number’d with the dead !

“O, blest, fervent thirst  
From life’s bondage to burst !  
His burthen the old man no more can endure.  
O, abode of the blest !  
Receive me to thy rest,  
Thou home of the wearied, calm, peaceful, secure !”

The low night wind walleth ;  
Its light the moon faileth :  
The goddess approacheth him anxiously,  
Weeping, trembling, and wan :  
“Leave me not, O, my son !  
I am childless if thou dost abandon me.”

The strange voice of love  
Doth his friendless heart move  
But he answereth her he, adoring, reveres :  
“Our realm is not here.—  
I go hence to that sphere  
Where existeth no evil, no suffering, no tears.”

With one deep sigh end his woes :—  
Coldly the billows close  
Those high, noble temples and silvery hairs o'er.—  
From earth he hath passed away.—  
Joyously dawneth day :  
Above Freedom's statue the blithe lark doth soar.

Lo ! where Truth weepeth sad,  
In snow-white marble clad,—  
Steadfast, noble in conscious integrity :  
Her hand on her breast ever,—  
Believed, alas ! never,—  
Her gaze is still fix'd on the dark-heaving sea.



#### THE DANCING FLEETING ONE.

THERE danceth a maiden at every man's door,  
The palace, the cottage, the prison before :  
A light flowing veil and green crown doth she wear,  
And that maiden, that maiden—O ! how she is  
fair !

She danceth, she danceth so lovingly,  
For rich and for needy, for captive, for free :  
And all who behold her light form, long in vain,  
That lovely young maid to their bosom to strain.



There singeth a maiden at every man's door,  
For the free, for the captive, for the rich, for the  
poor :

She singeth at cradle, she singeth at grave,  
She danceth on land and on the deep's wave.

She danceth and singeth so lovingly  
For wealthy, for poor, for captive, for free :  
And all to embrace that fair maiden are fain ;  
But when she is nearest she fleeth again.

• In the morning she singeth so joyous, so sweet,  
And danceth so lightly with fairy feet :  
As the life-giving sun in its bright course  
advanceth,  
More blithely she singeth, more lightly she  
danceth.

At noontide, less quickly, less gay, danceth she,  
While she points to her verdant crown earnestly :  
But when to thy bosom that maid thou wouldst  
strain,  
She smileth, and singeth, and fleeth again.

She danceth afar at the calm hour of even,  
And her song is inspiring as music of heaven :  
Then soaring, and soaring, the maiden doth fly,  
Till at last she is lost in night's dark-veil'd sky.

Who is she who danceth at every man's door,  
For captive, for free, for wealthy, for poor?—  
Who openeth her arms and in vain doth invite?  
O, know'st thou, O, know'st thou, that maiden  
aright?

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## THE WISHES.

WOULD I were the morning air!  
Softly to her couch I'd steal,  
Gently stir her silken hair,  
And joy if she my breath did feel:  
Then kiss her ruby lip, and dare  
Lightly the sacred zone unloose  
That guards her pure unsullied breast;  
Then flee away, warm, balmy, blest  
With all the sweets her charms diffuse.

Would I were the blessed tear,  
Which in her thoughtful deep-blue eye  
Glisteneth as a dew-drop clear,  
Whene'er she gazeth on yon sky!  
I would not heed what scoffers think;  
But to her breast of virgin snow,  
Softly, sweetly would I flow,  
And in that source of rapture—sink.

Would I were the holy thought  
Which her untainted soul doth move,  
When walking in a dream of love,  
Her heart throbs with emotion fraught,—  
Emotion far too pure for earth,  
To heaven alone it owes its birth!—  
Oh! then should our existence be  
As two united drops that run  
Into one spring:—thoughts, soul, all one,—  
One, one immortal harmony.

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## HAKON JARL.

THE nights are sombre, drear, and long;  
The seven stars glimmer faint and pale,  
While fearfully the pines among  
The hard winds sigh, and sob, and wail;  
And round the moss-grown gods of stone  
In Odin's groves of offering moan.  
"Our glory, our day,  
Is passed away!"  
Then crushing fall the blood-streak'd stones,  
And crush thee around strewn victim's bones.

Lo! where the vast gothic cathedral appears :  
So solemn, so stern, in the calm moon's cold  
glance ;  
Its high turrets 'gainst the dark-blue sky it  
rears,  
The while round the murk walls strange flit-  
ting shades dance ;  
And through the high windows, and up the arch'd  
aisle,  
The straying moon-beams on the crucifix smile.  
" Christ Jesus divine !  
The victory's thine !"  
Soon the mountains and rocks of the north shall  
bow down  
In devotion to him of the thorny crown.

King Olaf is landed on Norway's wild shore ;  
The mass hath been chanted on Norway's  
white strand :  
Sonorous and full o'er the billows' deep roar,  
'Twas chanted by monks from a far foreign  
land.  
The faith of Christ farther and sooner would  
spread,  
But by Hakon the wealthy, the Böndas are  
led.

For their fatherland's faith  
They will fight to the death.

But soon Olaf's Christian warriors' swords  
Will wide scatter and vanquish the proud heathen  
lords.

The cock croweth shrilly at midnight's tide,  
Jarl Hakon his only son slayeth :—  
He draweth the blood-reeking blade from his  
side,

Then kneels in the dark grove and prayeth :  
"White Christ! O, accept thou this sacrifice!

'Tis my own blood I offer—Let it be the price  
Of a lasting peace!

Oh! leave us! And cease  
To contend with the glorious gods of Valhal!"  
The owl, alone, answereth with shrieks that  
appal.

Unfurled on high the red-cross banners wave,  
And stream on the free mountain air.  
The lure nerves the hearts of the warriors  
brave

All numbers, all dangers to dare.  
As if joyous, exulting they rush to the fight,  
For the glory of heaven and king Olaf's right.

With his cross-hilted glove  
Olaf leads on his brave :  
Before him the rumour of victory hies,  
And abandon'd by all Hakon rageth and flies.

Away, away, as the wind doth he flee,  
Till trembling his foaming horse slackeneth  
pace.—

“Though all the Norwegians faint-hearted slaves  
be,

I ne’er will dishonor my ancient race !”  
With bitterest tears his last true friend he slayeth,  
In the noble steed’s heart’s blood his mantle he  
layeth :

“They will think here I died ;  
But my time I abide :  
For in the north there are yet kæmpers alive ;  
And on my side Great Tyr and Asa-Thor strive.”

Fell hate frowns on his brow, in his heart burneth  
rage :

With one only companion—a slave,  
While despair and revenge in his brain dire strife  
wage,

He hides in a deep, darksome cave:  
A flickering pine-torch makes the gloom but  
more drear,

They sit there in silence, suspicion, and fear.

No trust has the lord  
In the scowling slave’s word;  
And the thrall’s lowering looks thoughts of evil  
betide :

But he sleeps deep and heavily at midnight’s tide.

A sound, as of wind, in the depths of the cave,  
And Asa-Hermod, before Hakon doth stand :  
“The gods in thy proved valour confidence have ;  
In Olaf the Christian’s heart plunge thy brand !  
Lovely Freia sits weeping with dishevell’d hair :  
Shall a southern crucified felon thus dare  
Valhalla’s gods brave ?  
Up ! up ! draw thy glave !  
Let his young champion’s life-blood our stone  
statues cover !  
Thou shalt sit with the gods when thy earthly  
reign’s over !”

The shade having spoken thus, vanish’d away.  
But the thrall, waking : “Here white Christ  
stood:  
And the while o’er his features a bright smile  
display,  
He pointed to thee in thy blood !”  
“Ha ! the thunder consume thee, base cowardly  
thrall !  
Dost think with thy dreams Hakon Jarl to appal ?  
Or thy lord, vile slave ! say,  
Darest thou to betray ?”  
“No !” stammer’d the thrall. Soon, with past  
toils oppress’d,  
The wearied Jarl sleeps, though he tasteth no  
rest.

He sleeps,—but so fiendishly smiles in his dream,

That his slave, Karker, shudders with dread.

“Why grins he so scornfully?—Why did he seem

Unto me to lie gory and dead?

What is he?—a plunderer, who Norway would have

For his spoil. In his heart’s blood my hands will I lave.

They’ll call me bold:

They’ll give me gold.”

Thus mutters the wretch in the depths of the cave,

Then strikes—and Jarl Hakon lies slain by a slave.

Near sounds the loud lure on the steep mountain’s side.

“Here, there! Into yon cave they crept!”

As a torrent’s resistless, impetuous tide,

Down, down the abrupt crags they leapt,—

Rush’d into the cavern.—The wretched thrall dies,

By halberts struck down. With a smile in his eyes

Gazes Olaf on Hakon his foe,

At his feet lying gory and low.



"Now am I reveng'd: the chief heathen is slain,  
And the dark veil of ignorance, thus rent in  
twain."

It rolleth afar in the dark mountain cloud,  
It trembleth through ocean and earth.  
Of the ancient gods disappears the dense  
crowd,  
Never more to revisit the north.  
Instead of dark groves where moss-grown statues  
frown'd,  
The cathedral and hallowed cloister are found.  
But there and here,  
Afar and near,  
Yet standeth, time scorning, a huge granite  
stone,  
Telling darkly of actions and heroes by-gone.

---

SIVALD AND THORA.—A BALLAD.

SIVALD from Thora's loving breast  
Has torn himself with cruel laughter:  
In vain thy woe by sigh express'd,  
In vain thy tears, Oh Nature's daughter!

Coldly he seeks a foreign strand,  
Where her lament can reach him not.  
There buys the wretch, friends, honours, land :  
And Thora is, how soon, forgot !

Ten years,—and unto him remain  
Nor honours, land, nor health :  
He finds him sick, and poor again,—  
His friends flown with his wealth.

Alas ! that conscience but awakes  
When fortune flees away !—  
Faint signs pale Thora to him makes ;—  
He sees her night and day.

With beggar's scrip, and staff in hand,—  
With ragged clothes and haggard mien,  
He wanders to his fatherland,  
Which erst his youth's wild joys had seen.

At midnight, through the storm and rain,  
He struggles on with pain and fear :  
He knows his youthful home again,  
And in his dim eyes burns a tear.

In silence all the village lay.  
Each door is lock'd, he begs in vain ;  
His former friends drive him away  
With bitter taunts, with harsh disdain.

Unto the church he trembling turns,  
With weariness and cold oppress'd :  
His limbs benumb'd—his brain so burns—  
His anguish such he ne'er can rest.

But, lo ! the church door open stood :  
A faint gleam strikes his eye—  
He stops, fear curdling his heart's blood,  
Looks wildly towards the sky.

But urged by fate, in tottereth he,  
While fear denies him breath.—  
A gravedigger sings tranquilly :  
“ Who knows how near be death ? ”

He dug a grave the while he sung,  
And cast out mouldering bones,  
That rattled horribly, as flung  
Upon the surrounding stones.

“ Can habit give thy heart the power  
Thus to pursue without a dread  
Thy fearful task at midnight's hour,  
And coldly thus disturb the dead ? ”—

“ So long I'm wont to this my trade,  
That we are now all good friends here.  
At first 'tis true, I felt afraid,  
Whene'er a wandering ghost came near.

"But the dead sleep in peace for me,  
On th' execution place,—  
On battle field, beneath the sea,  
In earth, in leaden case.

"Tis but the evil borne and done,  
In life's dark way, can mar their peace.  
In earth is rest, on earth is none.—  
Happiest, whose life doth soonest cease!"

"For whom," ask'd Sivald, "digg'st thou this  
In the dark charnel-house?"—"For whom!  
Thou know'st him: he the murderer is  
Who 'scapes the bolder felon's doom.

"The ground is hard and solid grown.  
'Tis long since it by spade was stirr'd.—  
Just half a score of years have flown,  
Since last a corpse was here interr'd.

"'Twas a young mother with her child;—  
She took her life in fell despair,  
The wretch by whom she was beguil'd  
Deserted her and mock'd her prayer."

Cold, Sivald stood, as the grave's stone.  
"Her name! Her name?" he shuddering cried.  
"Her name was Thora: 'tis her bone  
I now cast up," the old man replied.

A wasted skull is cast up now—  
A bone, and then others follow.—  
The cold sweat bursts from Sivald's brow—  
Behind him echoes laughter hollow.

His head has fallen against the stones :  
His blood has stain'd the wall and flows  
On Thora's and her infant's bones—  
The clock tolls twelve, the cock shrill crows.

In vain they strive to cleanse the stones  
Whereon his abject blood was shed.  
The solemn knell of midnight tones  
The fearful vengeance of the dead.

---

#### THE BALLAD OF SINCLAIR.

GEORGE SINCLAIR sail'd o'er the briny wave,  
To Norway his course was bound :  
Amid Guldbrand's rocks he found a grave,  
While Scot's blood empurpled the ground.

Ay, Sinclair sail'd o'er the blue billow,  
To combat for Swedish pay.—  
God help thee ! It was on a gory pillow  
The Norskmen thy head did lay.

The pale moon was shining so peacefully ;  
The night was voiceless and still :  
A mermaid arose from the slumbering sea,  
And to Sinclair foreboded ill.

“ Oh, turn thee, oh, turn thee, bold Scottish man,  
Who to shed thy heart's blood art so fain !  
If to Norway thou sailest, thou never can,  
No, never, return again.”

“ I laugh at thy threatening and vain words of spite !  
Fools or cowards are they who believe thee.  
If I had thee but here, by yon moon's blessed light !  
With my broad sword asunder I'd cleave thee.”

He sailed one day, he sailed three,  
Along with his hireling band :  
On the fourth, at dawn should he Norway see ;  
Then Norskmen should fall by his brand.

On the coast of Romsdalen he steered to land,  
Proclaiming himself as a foe.  
Fourteen hundred well armed composed his band,  
Who little of mercy did know.

They ravag'd and murder'd wherever they came.—  
Oh ! the cry that arose from the dale !  
The aged and helpless they slew without shame,  
And laugh'd at the widow's wail !

The innocent child at the mother's breast,  
While it smiled on its butcher, was slain :  
But the cry of the dying and sore distress'd  
Arose not to heaven in vain.

The glare of the bale fires illumeth the night,  
The bidding-stick flieth by day.  
The sons of the valley shrink not from the fight ;  
For vengeance, not safety, seek they.

On their king's behest the soldiers are gone ;  
We ourselves must defend our land.  
Accursed for aye be that cowardly one  
Who shrinks from the enemy's brand.

The Böndas of Vaage, Lessöe and Lom,  
Each with his wood-axe in his hand,  
Together to Bredebörgde come,  
'Gainst the invaders to make a stand.

On a path nigh Lide defileth the foe :  
That mountain-pass Kringlen they call,  
The swift Longen rolleth its bright streams below,  
Into it shall the enemy fall.

No more on the wall the long rifle doth hang :—  
Yon marksman, with hair silvery gray,  
Is aiming : the Nökken awaiteth its clang,—  
So anxious to seize on its prey,

That first shot has pierced George Sinclair's  
brain,—  
He falleth without sigh or groan.  
“Now,” crieth each Scotsman, “our colonel is  
slain,  
There is safety in heaven alone!”

On, onward, brave Böndas ! on, onward, Norsk-  
men !  
Strike ! pitiless, strike down the foe !  
The invaders shall long for their country in vain :  
The ruthless no mercy shall know !

The pass of Kringlen is strewn with the dead ;  
The ravens are gluttoned with prey.—  
Oh ! the tears Caledonia's fair maidens shed  
For the young blood pour'd forth on that day !

Not one of all Sinclair's adventurous band  
Return to his country to tell,  
How dangerous it is to invade the land  
Of forest, fiord, and fell.

A monument standeth upon that spot,  
Proudly menacing Norway' foes.  
Woe worth the Norwegian whose heart warmeth  
not,  
As he by that monument goes !



## NOTE TO THE BALLAD OF SINCLAIR.

COLONEL GEORGE SINCLAIR sailed from Scotland, in the month of August, 1612, in company with Colonel Monkhaven; their forces amounting to 3,000 men, having been raised in Scotland for the service of Gustavus Adolphus, then at war with Christian IV. of Denmark. While Monkhaven proceeded to Trondhiem, Sinclair with the corps under his command (about 1,000, though the author of the above ballad sings of 1,400 men,) landed at Romsdalen, and thence marched into Guldbrandsdalen, plundering and laying waste the country as he passed. It is less than probable, however, that the atrocities laid by Norwegians to his charge were perpetrated. The circumstance of Colonel Sinclair's lady accompanying her husband surely would prove a restraint on the conduct of so small a body of soldiers, even were they not *Scots*. Be this as it may, they were attacked while defiling through a pass in Guldbrandsdalen, by the böndas of the parishes of Lessöe and Vaage: the peasants of Lom, also gathered for the fight; but after marching some little distance towards the intended scene of action, they began to doubt of the prudence of the step they were taking; so halted, and having held council together decided with one accord, that as to proceed was imprudent, the best step they could take would be a retrograde one: they therefore returned to their respective places of abode. And, behold, the hill top on which they halted to commune with one another, is called unto this day, Raad's Bakken, which is, being interpreted, the Hill of Council.

The peasants of Vaage and Lessøe, not being so *prudent* as the men of Lom, went boldly forward to oppose the well-armed and disciplined soldiers, the young with axes, the old with the few rifles they could procure. Seizing the opportunity when the foe was defiling through the narrow mountain pass of Kringlen, they began the fight. The very rocks seemed to share their patriotism as, loosened from the crags above, they thundered down the steep, and crushed the mercenary invaders. But, even in that hour of maddening excitement, the peasants forgot not that they were men; and a youth forced his way through the striving throng, and endeavoured to bear Lady Sinclair out of the *mêlée* to a place of safety; she, mistaking his purpose, plunged the dirk she wore into his breast: nevertheless, she was saved, treated honorably, ay, kindly; and conducted to Christiania, whence she sailed for Scotland. The dirk with which a woman slew the only Norskman who fell that day, is still preserved in Guldbrandsdalen.

"It is pleasing," says Larry, in his 'Norway,' "it is pleasing to observe that the people remember and feel pride in this gallant exploit of their forefathers.—They may justly boast of having cut off a body of regular invading troops by their own unaided valour."

Verse 14. "The Nökken awaiteth its clang."

Nökken is a river demon, who fulfils in Norway the part enacted by the *Kelpy* in Scotland.

## THE WOOER.—A BALLAD.

A NOBLE knight, comely, and manly, and bold,  
In shining steel armour and helmet of gold:  
A spirited proud-paced charger he rode,  
And rein'd up at Lunilla's peaceful abode.

"I have come, I have come, over mountain and sea,  
I have come, I have come, lovely maiden, to thee."  
"Thou'rt welcome," she faintly and timidly said,  
And open'd to him while she blush'd rosy red.

"I have come," he continued, "o'er mountain, o'er  
    sea,  
To my bride, lovely Lunil, to woo and win thee."  
The beauteous young maid on the stranger knight  
    gazed:  
O! was she offended, or was she amazed?

"I have come," he repeated, "o'er mountain, o'er  
    sea,  
I have come, lovely Lunil, a wooer to thee;  
And did vow, ere I hither did haste from afar,  
Or to win thee for bride or to perish in war."

Now pale as a lily, now red as a rose,  
While her young heart throb'd wildly, the maiden  
    arose:  
Ah! flee, noble knight!—I conjure thee! Ah, flee!  
For my hand and my heart they belong not to me."

"From my tenderest years I have loved a youth;  
Like thine were his blue eyes, like thine was his  
mouth;  
But his voice was more soft, and less dark was  
his hair,  
No beard clad his lip, and his brow was more  
fair.

"To a far distant land did my young lover go:  
But he soon will return to his true love, I know:  
Seven times has the year flown, with slow, heavy  
wing;—  
But I know, yes! I know, he will come with the  
spring."

"Fair maid, thy engagement was but childhood's  
play;  
And childhood's attachments with it pass away.  
In thy beardless young lover 'twere but vain to  
confide;  
He will never return to claim thee for his bride."

"Ah! no! stranger, no! my young lover would  
die,  
Ere he would deceive me so treacherously.  
On his bosom he beareth my hair and my name;  
But 'tis writ on his young heart in letters of  
flame."

"Then, indeed, must I flee;" thus the stranger replied,

"And seek death in battle instead of a bride.

But if e'er in thy dreams a wan shade thou shouldst see,

Oh ! grant it a tear, and then think, think of me !"

Then slowly departed that stranger so bold,

With shining steel armour and helmet of gold.

"Stay, stranger !—I love—nay, nay—stranger, flee !

Yet stay !—Nay, depart, for I must not love thee !"

Delighted, returned that stranger so bold ;

Threw off his steel armour and helmet of gold :

"In thy beardless youth 'twas not all vain to confide ;

Though, beardless, he ne'er will claim thee for his bride.

"Lo ! Lunil, his brow is impress'd with man's care,

His voice is more harsh and more dark is his hair."

"Heaven ! Ludvig !" she cried, and is clasp'd to his breast,

And the joy of their hearts is in silence express'd.

## THE MERMAID.

'MID the radiant stars shineth the mild orb of  
night;

A mermaid is dancing beneath its soft light :  
The dark billow rolleth upon the white sand,  
While a lovely youth goeth along the bare strand,  
With the yearning of love on his brow.

How voluptuous, how sweet is the sea-maiden's  
smile !

Full of love, full of truth,—so devoid of all guile !  
Ah ! gaze not upon her, fond youth ! but beware,  
Lest such charms, such enchantments, thy young  
soul ensnare.

Oh, turn thee ! Oh, turn thee now !

“Come hither, come hither ! Oh, come unto me,  
Thou who dancest like light on the wild heaving  
sea !

I have wandered south, I have wandered north,  
I have sought thee long throughout the wide earth,  
On earth I could find thee never.”

Then joyously danceth he hand in hand  
With the naked sea-maiden o'er the white sand.  
'Mid the radiant stars shineth the mild orb of night :  
They move on the waves in its silvery light,—  
Then sink in the deep for ever.

## THE INSTRUCTRESS.

SAY, haughty fair! rememb'rest thou the hour  
When in the first sweet dream of love thou  
stray'd,

Forget-me-not on thy breast, pensive, laid :—  
Soon, smiling, cast away such gentle flower?  
Say, cruel one! rememb'rest thou the child,  
Who snatch'd those flowers from the ungrateful  
ground,

As 'twere a sacred treasure he had found,—  
To his heart press'd them, look'd on thee, and  
smiled?

Rememb'rest thou how then unto thy breast,  
Delighted thou didst clasp that little boy,  
Kissing him in the innocence of joy?  
Unto thy bosom it was I thou press'd;  
And in that dear embrace didst thou destroy  
Peace which can ne'er return till thou dost make  
me blest.

## SONG.

“Ahndung ist unfre Weisheit hienieden und unfre Wonne  
Sehnsucht.”—STOLBERG.

WHITHER—O, whither? What doth it avail,  
Wild, wandering sprite!  
Thus trembling, to stray through the lonely dale,  
Silent in night?

What seekest thou in this dread solitude,  
When the wild wind  
Is whistling shrill o'er the sombre wood,  
In the moon's shine?

What seek'st thou above in each silvery star,  
When deep and wide,  
Mysteriously toneth the horn from afar,  
At midnight's tide?

Why tremblest thou thus on thy way so lorn?  
What dost thou fear,  
When soaring in harmony thou art borne  
To a better sphere?

What truth on my soul, O, Eternity! beameth,  
This holy now,  
When forgetting the earth; of thee only it  
dreameth,  
That knowest Thou.



## SONG OF THE MAIDEN BY THE RIVER.

DANCE on, dance on ; sing, sportive waves,  
Your wonted melody !  
A tear of joy my cold cheek laves,  
The while I gaze on ye.  
O, murmur gladly as ye flow ;  
Your gentle voice doth soothe my woe.

While wandering by ye, gentle streams,  
My heart's wild throbbing cease,  
And my lorn soul recalleth dreams  
Of happiness and peace :  
Your murmurs lull my mind to rest,  
And still the strife within my breast.

There was a time, long, long ago,  
When I, as ye, was gay.—  
Or ere my heart knew real woe :  
That time hath flown for aye.  
Life's wild storm wreak'd on me its power,  
And left me a poor broken flower.

Yet, dancing, sing, pure sportive waves,  
Your wonted melody !  
A tear of joy my cold cheek laves,  
The while I gaze on ye.  
O, murmur gladly as ye flow ;  
Your gentle voice doth soothe my woe.

## ELSA'S LAY.

WHEREFORE, wherefore flow thy tears  
O'er cheeks as pale as those who sleep  
In death? Few, maiden, are thy years.  
Oh! wherefore dost thou sing and weep?

I have lost all earthly gladness;  
I have felt all earthly pain.  
Seek not to control my sadness!  
Let me sing and weep again!

Beneath the moon's mysterious beam  
I sat, and sew'd my winding-sheet,  
And dreamt—yes! yes! it was a dream,—  
A dream, how transient, yet how sweet!

The moon glared luridly in heaven,  
On me as I sat all alone;  
In the dark west, the star of even  
With pure and placid radiance shone.

Alone I felt, and fear came o'er me;  
I strove to chase it with my song:  
When lo! I saw a form before me  
Far lovelier than to men belong.

With the wood-owl's complaining moan,  
The distant lea's monotony,  
And the lorn nightingale's rich tone,  
Blended was his deep, deep sigh.

No more I saw the moon on high,  
No more, the evening-star's pure ray ;—  
My vision'd angel's radiant eye  
Illumined my darksome way.

Lo! gently he approacheth now:  
No more I feel myself alone:  
I gaze upon his noble brow,  
I listen to his harp's blest tone.

He paused, his harp's tones were hush'd :  
I rose and hasten'd to the spot.—  
Into my cheek the warm blood rush'd :  
But he stood still—he saw me not.

One look of deep, long suffering woe  
A moment unto Heaven he gave ;  
Then gazed upon the earth below,  
As though he gazed upon his grave.

Again he turn'd his gaze on high—  
Ah! then that sombre look grew wild ;  
But when it met my anxious eye,  
How gentle it became ! how mild !

How did that mutual look impart  
Peace unto him, joy unto me !  
He sank upon my throbbing heart,—  
My heart sank in the Deity.

Our souls into one soul did flow,  
As he lay on my panting breast—  
We knew no doubt, no fear, no woe :  
We only felt that both were blest.

When I awoke in the calm heaven  
Shone the bright moon, no longer red ;  
Set was the radiant star of even.—  
My angel at my side lay—dead.

Lost every joy the living know,  
Love and hope, and rest, and sleep ;  
Abandon'd to myself and woe,  
I can but wander, sing, and weep.

---

SESSRUMNIR.\*

THERE is a hall high o'er yon ether blue,  
Which from the morning beams receiveth light ;  
Unnumber'd stars in vivid radiance strew  
Its floor, while many a wondrous meteor bright

\* Sessrumnir, the spacious abode or dwelling, the palace of Freia, in Folkvang.

Glisteneth above. Around are arching bower  
Through which the west wind mild its wa  
winging,  
Diffusing odours from a thousand flowers,  
A thousand fond thoughts unto me  
bringing.

Each tender joy the heart must here forego,  
There, as a fragrant fair flower doth invite  
And all the longing tears here bitter flow,  
As dew upon the lily glistens bright ;  
And every word that ardent love compelleth  
The timid lips to utter as with pain,  
Wafted unto this blessed region swelleth  
Love's most enchanting, most triumphant st

Each evening doth the silvery moon arise,—  
No mists, no clouds are there her charm  
hide :—  
Behind the aged trees the lover hies,  
And finds his young love the clear str  
beside :  
Love's first soft pantings, first love's sinking e  
Each eve he tastes with the first kiss so dear  
Each glimpse of joy that hence, as lightning, fl  
There with calm evening's beam doth reapp

When the true loving leave the earth to mourn  
Over the dust in which their ashes rest,  
Hither are they on the swift night winds borne,  
And welcom'd unto Freia's friendly breast.  
There, Fylla, there my soul shall mix with thine,  
When quench'd the last spark of this bosom's  
fire,—  
When thy love-beaming eyes have ceased to shine,  
And toneless from my hand hath fallen the lyre.

---

## SONG.

WHEN the last golden ray of calm evening  
beameth  
Benignly on thee through the leafy oak grove,  
And there passeth before thee a figure that  
seemeth  
To invoke peace on thee with a gesture of love,  
'Tis thy friend who hath come from the realms of  
the blest,  
To shield thee from sorrow, to guard o'er thy  
rest.

When the moon, half extinguish'd, doth struggling  
appear  
Through the silvery small clouds that drift o'er  
the sky,—  
When wrapt in a dream of pure love, thou dost  
hear  
Soft music, as sighing the night air sweeps by,—  
Tones recalling a time-chasten'd vision of love,—  
My spirit it is through the forest doth move.

And feelest thou, love, when swift-wing'd thoughts  
assemble  
In the groves where the souls of the well-belov'd  
rest  
A soft gentle breath, which as fondly doth  
tremble  
As soft zephyr's kiss, on thy lips and thy breast,  
While in thy hand wavereth a moment the light,  
O, believe, 'tis my spirit who bids thee "Good  
night !"

And hearest thou, loved one, when many a star  
On thy couch, through thy lattice doth pryingly  
shine,  
As the sweet harp of Æolus, sounding afar,  
The sacred engagement, "Eternally thine !"  
Then slumber, beloved, unstirr'd by a fear !  
Oh ! slumber in peace, for my spirit is near.

## FREEDOM.

HAIL, hail to him who feels the worth  
Of liberty, life's truest joy !  
No tyranny, no powers of earth  
His spirit's freedom can destroy.  
For him the dungeon frowns in vain ;  
He mocks the hand would Freedom chain.  
Hail, hail to him who feels the worth  
Of liberty, life's truest joy !

To truth, his god, his life belongs :—  
With fervour and with fire  
He nobly pleads his country's wrongs  
And scorns the oppressor's ire.  
Prepare the block : he trembleth not.  
For truth he dies.—Thrice blessed lot !  
Unto the source of truth and light  
Doth his free soul aspire.

THE END.



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